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ITALIAN YESTERDAYS

VOL. I

ITALIAN YESTERDAYS

BY

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"A Diplomatist's Wife in Many Lands,"
"Reminiscences of a Diplomatist's
Wife," etc.

VOL. I

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INTRODUCTION

IT has not been easy to find a title for the collection of memories, personal and otherwise, which this book contains, but I hope that the reader will feel that in calling it "Italian Yesterdays," I have honestly tried to describe its contents. Recollections of my own experiences have found a place beside the stories and legends of saints and sinners long passed away from the land where they played their parts,—some virtuous, some infamous, but all notable and worth remembering for the glory or the tragedy of their lives. I have sometimes thought that we modern people scarcely know how rich we are, how many and how choice the treasures that History has devised to us, and which, for the most part, lie unclaimed in her storehouses. And I have hoped, in opening some of them, to induce others to seek out for themselves and make their own some of the wonderful tales of love and valour which shine at us from the pages, not only of the old books, but from those which the writers of our own day have so wisely and lovingly compiled for us. In this connection I must acknowledge my own indebtedness especially to Hodgkin, Dill, Montalembert, Dom Guéranger, Hazlitt, and Coletta, historians who, each from his own point of view, make the past really live before our eyes. For the incidents connected with Pius IX., no better book can be found than "Rome, its Ruler and its Institutions," by J. Maguire. In regard to subjects outside the range of the writers I have mentioned, it is almost impossible to give my references, as they cover many scat-

tered records not easily accessible to the public; but the stories, strange as some of them appear, are all real ones, very carefully collated and verified.

This seems the right place for the withdrawal of a statement printed in my last book, " Reminiscences of a Diplomatist's Wife "; and since the recantation removes a stain from a memory which I have already been forced to treat none too gently, I make it with great willingness. I said that Mr. Nathan, the Mayor of Rome, was the son of Mazzini. The statement has been sharply corrected, both by Mr. Nathan himself and by a well-known English writer who was Mazzini's intimate friend. Misled by what I must call at least a widely accepted impression, I evidently fell into a grave error, for which I now wish to tender my apologies to the memory of the dead, and the expression of my sincere regret to the living, whose susceptibilities I have wounded on this delicate point.

MARY CRAWFORD FRASER.

October, 1913.

CHAPTER I

IMPRESSIONS OF EARLY ROME

Romance and Companionship of the Past—Rome the Supremely Beloved—Pictures and Legends of Her Origin—Migration of the Alban Shepherds—Romulus and Remus—Etruria's Civilisation—Whole World Contributes to Rome's Growth—Brilliant Scenes in the Roman World—Rome's High Destiny—Numa Pompilius, the Law-giver—Egeria's Grotto—Love Story of Herodes Atticus and Annia Regilla—Early Christianity.

IT has always seemed to me that one of the most perfect experiences within the grasp of mortals would be that of a child brought up in seclusion by an adored parent, only known to its heart and mind as such — and to find, on reaching maturity and coming out into the world, that the beloved one was the ruler of a mighty empire, venerated and feared by millions of men. How that knowledge would transfigure and ennoble the memories of childhood, of the protecting companionship bestowed, the being rocked to sleep in those strong arms, of the sunny play-hours of childhood's day watched by those wise and loving eyes!

All this was Rome to me, through many a long year before the doors were opened and the glory of her was made known to my mind. Then the old indulgent comradeship, accessible to every mood of youthful joy and sorrow, became tinged with awe and yet was doubly cherished; it grew a thousand times more precious, yet, like some holy relic that one wraps in silk and gold, had to be enshrined with other sacrednesses in the sanctuaries of memory. One was no longer Rome's careless child,

to whom all her yesterdays were playthings of equal value with her wild flowers of to-day. She called — and there was no disobeying the new command. The nursery door was closed forever, and one took one's place silently and gladly in the last, lowest rank of her subjects and soldiers.

From that moment one began to learn, weakly and imperfectly, it is true. At first the greatness of the new knowledge overwhelmed one. I remember writing to the great French Prelate who received me into the Church, that I felt like a beggar suddenly admitted into the palace of his King, dazzled with the warmth and splendour, yet utterly ignorant of which way to turn or how to comport himself in those august surroundings. I fancy others have experienced the like bewilderment, and happy they, if they fell into such wise and loving hands as those which were held out to me and finally helped me to fix on a study which, far from making the most serious of all subjects dry and unattractive, enriched it with the warmest touches of human feeling — the holy glory of the true romance.

Such study, such reading, is really within reach of all in these days of almost universal translation and simplification; but so many know nothing of how to obtain the right books — so many, indeed, are utterly unconscious that there is anything to know beyond the few distorted facts doled out in non-Catholic schools, that even the most unassuming effort to share these riches with them may be useful and welcome. Modern life is apt to be a dry, unflowery affair, but that is because our own laziness of mind permits it to become so. If we choose to take the past, it is ours; and I defy any one to claim his inheritance therein and not find a heart-warming

thought, a refreshment and a fragrance for every moment of solitude, a chapter of high romance for every day of the long, working year!

A romance must be a love story, and of all the love stories of time, that of Rome is the most marvellous. Certain girl children, we are told, were born so beautiful that, like Helen of Troy, Lucrezia Borgia — and she whose soul was of equal loveliness with what the chronicler calls "the supreme and royal beauty" of her body, Saint Radegonde, Queen of France, they were passionately loved, passionately defended, passionately sung, from the hour of their birth. And Rome, from the hour when the first hut was built on the right bank of the yet nameless river, when the stones of her first low wall wrote her name on that predestined soil, has been loved with a personal passion that has not its like in the world's history. So, we know, she will be loved to the end. The very hatreds that have attacked her, the cataclysms that have exhausted themselves in attempts to annihilate her, the cupidity and treachery that have bargained for her whom no price can buy, no hand of man can hold, all testify to the desire of the nations to call her theirs. Above and beyond the clamours of earth, she pursues her immortal destiny, "mother of all earth's orphans" as Byron called her, the nurse of every noble and humble soul, the home and property of the poorest, most ignorant Catholic — but no man's henchwoman, no King's chattel; now as in the past, and till earth's last sunrise, the true mistress of the world.

Could she be less, marked at her birth for empire, first of nations and then of souls? What has not been brought to her by tribute humanity since nature bore her in flame and upheaval, cradled her in sunshine and nurtured her

with balm? Looking at her to-day and remembering her past, what wonderful pictures are unrolled before our eyes! Let us go back to the first of which history speaks, and call up the time when the nameless river flowed past the yet nameless hills that were to become the judgment seats of the world.

Standing on the outer rim of the Pincian terrace, watching the primrose die to grey after a sunset in spring, I have gazed over towards St. Peter's and tried to see the land as it looked to Rome's builders, the shepherds who fled hither from their ruined homes in the Alban Hills and halted on the southern side of the yellow river, unbridged and unnamed as yet. For it was surely the river that stayed their panic flight only eighteen miles from where the twin volcanoes had vomited fire from the craters that are now the limpid lakes of Nemi and Albano. Though near, the spot seemed safe for the first night. Doubtless they told each other that the next day they would find a ford and travel twice as far again to the low, dark line of the Cimmerian Hills to the northward. But here, at any rate, was herbage and water for the sheep and kine they had saved, and unbroken solitude, where, under the rough skin canopy spread from bough to bough, the women — the few who had found strength to travel — could nurse their babies and sleep for one night unmolested by hostile tribes.

So they rested, the younger men keeping watch by the two or three campfires built to scare away the wolves and foxes. And the morning came, a morning of March, with a leap of the sun from behind the Sabine ramparts, and the dew pearled on oak and wild olive branch overhead, on moss and fern beneath, with the little wild almond trees on the slopes across the river snowy with newly burst

blossoms, while the first lark soared up towards the sun-shot blue in an ecstasy of song, and the swallows, just back from the shores of Africa, wheeled lower and lower and darted upward again, with angry cries, when they found their last year's home invaded by men and beasts. They made friends with men's dwellings later, and, forgetting the crannies of the woodlands, have built in the eaves of palaces for many a century now, but I take it that in swallow sagas those first traditions have been winged down and are still twittered about, with due respect, when the patriarchs hold their sky conclaves in the autumn and the spring, and drill the fledglings for three weeks before the great semestral migration.

From where the tired shepherds had halted on the high land to the southeast of the river, the empty cradle of unborn Rome would look very fair in the clear spring morning, and but short debate must have decided, for those men of few words, that here the gods meant them to stay. So here, as we can still trace, Romulus, the wolf's nursling, marked (after enquiring of the wise men of Etruria as to the commands of the gods concerning the foundation of a city) the lines for his wall, ploughing, as the legend says, with white Campagna steers, on his chosen hill the Palatine, where the new altar, raised over a pit in which the first-fruits of the year and a handful of soil from each man's former home had been buried, already sent up clouds of incense into the sweet spring air on that memorable 21st of April, 754 B.C. And Remus, his twin, wolf-nursed like him, was angry that his own hill, the Aventine, had not been awarded the honours, mocked at his brother's commands, and sprang across the mystic furrow, to be instantly slain by Celer, Romulus' faithful henchman, thus conferring the baptism

of human blood which almost till our own times was prescribed by necromancers as the only means of rendering great strongholds stable and impregnable.

It is strange to find that from the very birthday of Rome she knew how to levy tribute of the higher kind from other nations. When the frightened Alban shepherds, mostly men little regarded heretofore in the rich city of Alba Longa, spread their skin tents and then threw up their windowless cane huts on the banks of the Tiber, Etruria, a few score of miles to the north, possessed a written language, learned hierophants, bold and scientific architects, full-grown arts of surpassing beauty, marble amphitheatres, great cities supplied with indefectible streams of pure water, and a costly and complicated system of drainage. Rome sends humble enquiries to Etruria, beseeching to be taught how to address and propitiate the great gods. Etruria gladly condescends to reply, and in a given time, though not without much strife and bloodshed, Etruria becomes first a tributary and then a vassal of the adolescent Empress of the world, who, through all the centuries of her after history, repeats that requisition. Rough, practical, hard-handed, and strong, yet avid of beauty, she will have all that is fairest and most precious. Her Art consisted in appreciation; she resolved to possess; the world had to be conquered to give her what she desired, but the world gave — Greece her sculpture and painting and poetry, the Orient its silks and jewels and spices, the South its gold and grain, its wild beasts and hordes of slaves, the North its furs and warriors, the West its granite and lead; the seas swarmed with her laden fleets, and the whole known world became a vast diagram of white converging roads choked with spoils for Rome.

What strange sights those roads must have seen when the long camel trains came plodding through from Persia with their escort of black-bearded, ringletted merchants, raising whirlwinds of dust and eliciting strings of curses from the fair-haired drivers of ox-teams from Gaul, drawing huge loads of fruit and wine to Roman markets! There the vendors of jewels, keen-eyed Jews and Syrians, armed to the teeth, had to draw aside angrily for the passage of bulky wares which one gem from the tiny silk-wrapped packet in their bosoms would have paid for ten times over; here comes a richly draped litter with armed horsemen in attendance — a great noble's wife? No, only a beautiful woman being carried to the slave market where she will fetch the highest price. Suddenly a solitary horseman dashes through the throng at break-neck pace, heedless of the death his steed's hoofs may deal. Shall the Cæsar's despatches wait for the safety of the common herd? With perhaps eight or nine hundred miles of road to cover in a given time, the Imperial messenger sees nothing, knows nothing, but his goal and the shortest way to it. How they rode — those express messengers! There are many wild rides on record, but for swiftness and perseverance I think that of the benevolent Roman official Cæsarius, hastening from Antioch to Constantinople to intercede for the guilty Antiocheans, is the most wonderful. I believe it is Theodoret who attests to the fact that he covered the distance of nearly eight hundred miles through two ranges of mountains and over much broken country, in six days!

Many a century had to pass before all roads could lead to Rome, but, while the city was still a mere fortified hamlet, one spot took on the character which it has kept through the ages and will keep till the last day. Looking

over to the further bank of the river, the builders on the Palatine could see, as we see to-day, when the sun has sunk in the west, a long dark ridge rising like a wall to shut out the lower crimson of the sky. It was wooded then, with oak and pine, though now there is but one tree left, the "Doria pine," to mark where the forest grew. The ridge sunk at its northern extremity, in irregular undulations, heavily wooded and mysteriously dark, and these connected it with a chain of low hills which stretched away along the river's bank till they were lost in the mist of the Campagna.

The higher ridge very early took on the name of Mons Janiculum; the further hills were more or less nameless till the Renaissance: but the bosky stretch between the two was regarded from the first as sacred ground. Why, one can scarcely say, except for its solitude and its cloistered verdure. Looking towards it now, one asks oneself if there was indeed a time when those who gazed westward from the city's ramparts at evening, did not behold, across the sea of mist that lays twilight on the streets while the heights are still bathed in gold, that immortal outline of a dome, dark, delicate, and definite, between them and the setting sun? A time when the soil that bears it held only the oaks and ilexes of the grove where the "Vates," the unapproachable hierophants of high, half-known gods, prayed and prophesied according to their lights? Where the common people came, not too close, and paused, hushed and trembling, under the great trees, to learn the wills and ways of the gods? How gladly they must have sped back, ere night fell, across the one bridge, to their safe, crowded homes within the walls, to lean together across the olive-wood fire and speak in whispers of the oracles they had heard, while the baby rolled naked on

the soft goatskin, and the brown-legged youngsters sat on their haunches, sniffing at the goat's meat bubbling in the caldron on the hook, and the good wife brought out the fern basket of snowy cheese and washed the crisp fennel roots on the doorstep! Were they merely men of their hands, those first Romans, thinking more of comfort and safety than of anything else? A writer who could surely speak with authority tells us that from the first the people of Rome itself have been innately religious, always conscious or subconscious of their city's destiny. Surely to one, here and there, in some portentous dawn or brooding twilight, the figure of things to be was cast up against the sky! Did not the slowly-moving clouds sometimes pause over that low ridge in the west, to mass themselves in the likeness of a dome, the stars sink down from their courses to foreshadow the gold of a cross?

The Mons Vaticanus, low, and excluded from the city limits, was never reckoned one of the seven hills; of all the Roman district it was considered the least healthy part, the land being swampy and subject, on its lowest levels, to the periodical incursions of the river. The "Vates," versed as they were in all wisdoms, doubtless discovered means by which to preserve themselves from malaria, for this continued to be their sanctuary, if not their home, for many generations. After the Romans had, at the prayer of their stolen Sabine wives, become reconciled with the men of Sabina — and, in true Roman fashion, first given them part in the land and invited them to assist in government, and then taken them on as masters — the great Sabine Judge-King, Numa Pompilius, established himself among the Vatican groves to compile his books of laws. There he wrote, there he died, and

there was buried, commanding that his precious volumes should have a separate tomb near his own. "A man's works live after him;" the site of Numa's tomb was mere guess-work, his very existence was scoffed at as a myth, by progressive historians, till accident revealed the still intact sepulchre of his cherished writings, precisely on the spot marked by tradition for some twenty-five centuries. The good law-giver was one of the revered realities of my childhood; with sorrow I saw his memory cast away, when I grew up, on the ever-growing scrap-heap of condemned myths, where the iconoclasts of history throw everything that does not fit in to their small neat conceptions; he has come back to me in these later years, and how welcome the towering luminous figure that hovered so protectingly over my early mind pictures of infant Rome!

One point in his history always puzzled me, the great distance between his home across the Tiber and the grotto where Egeria, the heavenly nymph, instructed him in wisdom. That lay in a fold of the Cælian Hill, and the entire length of the city has to be traversed to reach it from the Vatican. I used to weave many fairy tales for myself about Egeria when, as children, we were taken to spend the day in the lovely spot then known as her "Grotto," and so exquisitely described by Byron in "Childe Harold" that there seems nothing left for ordinary mortals to tell about it. But — I will take the risk of appearing presumptuous and say that one factor was wanting to Byron for the task — he was not born a Roman, and his sad childhood, unlike my own, held no memories of paradisial hours of play and dreaming round the hallowed fountain, and in the sacred grove.

For sacred the spot remains, although we know now

that it was not, as men thought for many centuries, Egeria's grotto and Egeria's grove, but the shrine and monument of a merely human love, very strong and pure, the love of a husband mourning a good wife and vowing to perpetuate her memory in beauty and charity. Since this book is not for the learned, but for those who, treading the busy walks of modern life, have no time to pore over history and its romances, I will venture to tell again the story of this true lover.

During the short reign of Nerva (96-98 A.D.), an Athenian gentleman, named Hipparchus, fell into disgrace with the still very Greek government of his native city. I do not know the origin of the trouble, but Athens always dealt rather capriciously with her great ones, and we may infer that the great wealth of Hipparchus had aroused envy in his less fortunate fellow-citizens. His entire fortune was confiscated, nothing being left to him but an apparently worthless plot of ground near the Acropolis. This ground his son, Atticus, undertook with philosophical patience to cultivate, so as to provide some food for the impoverished family. To his amazement the furrow intended to produce leeks and cabbages revealed a hidden treasure of gold, buried there in some forgotten stress of past ages, and so abundant that the young man, after his first joy of surprise, was filled with terror.

The discovery was portentous and the revulsion of feeling almost too much for a mortal to bear. However, he had presence of mind enough to keep the thing secret from all but his own family. One can fancy how, in the blue Athenian morning, he hastily threw the earth and stones back over the precious find, and, abandoning spade and ploughshare, went home to take counsel as to his conduct in regard to it. Did the old man, Hipparchus, die

of joy on hearing of his good fortune? It may have been so, for at this point he disappears from the story and returns no more. Atticus remains in possession, but such hazardous possession! If his fellow-citizens heard of the treasure, they would wrest it from him; if the Emperor learnt of it, he, as lord of all soil of the Empire, had the right to claim it for himself. To enjoy it on the spot or to remove it in secret was equally impossible, and Atticus wisely decided to throw himself on the well-known generosity of the Emperor. So he sent him word that he had discovered a fortune on his land, and humbly asked to be directed as to the disposal of it. The Emperor, too busy to give the subject much thought, or else pleased with the man's honesty, replied that he could use it as he liked. But this casual authorisation was not enough to calm the fears of Atticus. Once more he wrote to Nerva, saying that the treasure was too great for the use of a private person and that he entreated the Emperor to make known his will in regard to it. This time he received a most explicit answer, to the effect that his own good fortune had bestowed the gift upon him and that he was to "use what he could, and abuse the rest."

Thus fortified in his rights, Atticus did use his wealth royally, and bequeathed it to his own son, Herodes Atticus, who, forgetting past injuries, lavished it in ornamenting with splendid buildings the city of his birth, in all-embracing charities, in providing public games of the greatest splendour, and in the encouragement of art and literature. Then, desiring to see the seat of Empire and enjoy the intellectual atmosphere of the Augustan age, he removed to Rome, and on account of his great learning and attainments, was appointed tutor to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, the adopted sons of the then

reigning Emperor, Antoninus Pius. He left no literary monument of his own for us to admire, but the clear beauty of the style of Marcus Aurelius is doubtless due in great part to the early training received from his Greek tutor.

Standing thus high in imperial favour, Herodes Atticus was enabled to make a splendid alliance. He obtained the hand of Annia Regilla, a daughter of the great Julian House, and thus crowned the long romance of his life by a real love marriage. Annia Regilla was marvellously beautiful, as good as she was fair, and returned her husband's affection by a love as whole-hearted as his own. In an age when universal selfishness and luxury made it necessary to legislate against race suicide, she bore Herodes child after child, each more welcome to its parents than the last. Was ever a man's cup of earthly happiness so royally full?

Then it was dashed from him and emptied at a blow. Annia Regilla died very suddenly when the birth of her fifth child was hourly expected, and for a time her broken-hearted husband seemed likely to succumb to despair; but the very magnitude of his grief saved him — in more ways than one. The Greek desire for concrete expression, the impulse to embody in visible form the worshipped ideals of the mind, drove him at first to violent manifestations of mourning which appeared extravagant and unreal to the easy-going superficial Romans of his day. They took life pretty much as it came, even as the Romans do now, and the sight of Herodes Atticus in his black robes, in his house hung completely with black — where he even removed the flowery-tinted marbles of walls and pavements to replace them with sombre grey — all this afforded intense amusement to his fashionable friends.

But he had one enemy. His wife's brother had deeply resented the marriage of Annia Regilla to a man whom he considered a low-born outsider, quite unfit to mate with a maid of his own patrician house; and, she being dead, the haughty aristocrat gave free rein to his animosity and accused Herodes of having poisoned his spouse. The absurdity of the indictment was potent to all, but the outraged widower insisted upon being publicly tried for the crime. The outcome, as he intended it should, crushed the calumny forever, the Judges declaring that his devotion to his wife during her lifetime and the unmistakable sincerity of his grief at her death were all-sufficient proofs of his innocence.

The fury of anger roused in him by the attack seems to have recalled his energies and restored his balance of mind. He quit mere repining, and swore to erect to his dead such a monument as woman never had before. The beautiful villa where their happy years had been passed stood in a shallow valley of the Campagna, some little distance to the right of the Appian Way, not far from the already ancient tomb of Cecilia Metella. At that time the land along the Appian Way, nearly as far as the Alban Hills, was covered with palaces and villas, costly monuments and beautiful gardens. The home of the wealthy Greek was remarkable enough to be famous even among these, although he had chosen for its site a piece of land belonging to his wife, indeed, but held till then in rather scornful repute. In spite of the fact that a small temple of Jupiter had stood there from very early times, this charming valley had been used as a spot to which the "Jews," otherwise the Christians, had more than once been banished under very hard conditions, to punish their contumacy in refusing to sacrifice to the

statues of the gods. Here, says a learned Catholic historian, St. Peter himself came with many of his flock, during his first visit to Rome, to take refuge in the subterranean crypts which, hastily dug in those early years, were afterwards enlarged and extended till they formed an underground city for the living and a safe resting-place for the dead.

Of Christianity, whether above or below ground, Herodes Atticus knew little and doubtless cared less. The despised sect aroused but faint interest in the upper classes, and the most scathing reproaches on their voluntary degradation were addressed to any of the latter who joined it or manifested pity for its sufferers. But Atticus had a warm and generous heart in his bereavement; it is said that he gave away great sums in charity, and one can scarcely doubt that some of these gifts relieved the wants of the poor Christians who begged for alms along the Appian Way, and, as we shall presently see, served the Church so notably in times of persecution, both before and after the days of Herodes Atticus. The estate of the latter covered all the ground on the right from the third to the fourth milestone of the famous road, and he had vowed during Annia Regilla's lifetime that he would make it the most beautiful as well as hospitable of all the suburban villages. Now, he laid out what was afterwards known as the "Pagus Triopius" in lovely gardens, baths, and temples, where all his friends, rich and poor, were invited to enjoy their share of his wealth by an inscription over one of the gates, which ran, "This is the abode of hospitality."

After his acquittal from the abominable accusation brought against him by his brother-in-law, he offered all his wife's jewels to the Temple of Ceres and Proserpine,

asking Heaven to smite him if he had been guilty of the imagined crime; then he built her a magnificent tomb in a garden laid out for that purpose — a garden which he called "The Field of Sepulchre" and in which only her direct descendants were to be laid forever.

In reading all the story of this true lover (translated — for Greek is still Greek to me — from the very full inscriptions found at the Pagus, and from the writings of Philostrates and Pausanias) I could not help reflecting how few direct ways true love has of manifesting itself — for one and the same was the thought of Abraham, insisting on buying and holding for his very own the field of Mamre, to bury Sara in — and the preoccupation of the highly cultured Greek to enshrine the remains of his beloved Annia, where, by all human prevision, they could never be disturbed. Also, the beloved Annia's tomb has crumbled into dust. All that is left of Herodes Atticus' garden is the ilex grove and the ruined nymphæum with the broken statue and the clear fountain, which, as a little girl, I knew as the grotto of Egeria.

But that which, all unknown to Atticus, was even then burrowing and spreading beneath his beautiful gardens and palaces, the underground city of Christianity, where the faith lay like rich seed in the dark, warm earth, *that* survives, and its ways have been worn smooth by the feet of thousands of pilgrims for nearly twenty centuries. The rent bodies and few poor ashes of the "Christian Beggars" of the Appian Way were never approached save with love and veneration, and, whereas the slab of exquisite Pentelic marble on which Annia's epitaph — in thirty-nine Greek verses — was inscribed, has become part of a public collection, the name and date, and the rude attempt at a palm branch to indicate the martyr's

death, stand out as clear to-day on the walls of the Catacombs as they did when they were hastily scratched in the soft clay, at some midnight burial under Nero or Diocletian, the envious though mourning brethren praying "that the Church might have peace," but, yet more fervently, that they also might be found worthy if their own hour must come first.

CHAPTER II

REMINISCENCES OF MODERN ROME

Rome's Seasons—Childhood Memories of a Roman Spring—My Birthday Festival—A Day in the Country—The Appian Way—Rome's Great Wall—An Adventure with the Campagna Steers—Campagna Sheep-Dogs—Early Morning Street Scenes—The Giardino Colonna—Secluded Italian Gardens—Inroads of Commercialism—Discovery of a Dream-Garden of the Renaissance—Song of the Nightingale in the Lost Italian Garden.

IT is time to take breath. So far, we have been living over in mind the joys and sorrows of certain dwellers near the Appian Way, but every true story, however fair and fine, seems to run like crystal beads strung on a dark thread. The shadow of possible tragedy is behind all things human, and even the happiest tales of old leave one with a little pang at heart for the black hour of death which came to all the actors in them sooner or later. One turns with relief to the things that people wrongly call inanimate — the things of Nature, whose life is so comfortingly different from our own, so rich in vitality that each declining season is lifted up and carried on in the arms of the next, as it were, to return in all its vigour and beauty when the moment arrives.

To dwellers in Rome the "honied core" of all the year comes with the first days of spring. Looking back on Roman winters, indeed, from my later experiences of the season in arctic climates, they were, with few exceptions, one carol of brightness and sunshine; we spoke of winter for the sake of putting on our furs and lighting a few fires, but the violets never ceased to bloom in the

open, the shady avenues of the many villas were not too cool for dalliance, and it was only when the "tramontana," blowing over the mountains in the north, turned the air from balm to crystal, that we had a touch of real winter at all. Nevertheless, the spring, its opening day marked by the arrival of the first swallows, was intoxicatingly welcome. The first day of Lent had put a period to most of the social functions and — such is the levity of youth — had given us girls time to think of a spring frock or so. Then, on some March morning, the cry would go through the house, "The swallows have come!" and thenceforward we lived very much in the open air. From the time when I was very small it had always been the same, and even now, at my "far world's end," and with five decades between the "now" and the "then," the memory of those spring days goes to my head a little. In a snow-bound land of pale suns and wintry wastes I can shut my eyes and feel again the bath of sunshine, smell the bitter-sweet of Campagna thyme and daisy, almost hear the larks at their singing, the soft bleating of the Campagna lambs, the baying of the white sheep dogs, the faint piping of the solitary shepherd boy sitting on the low stone fence while his flock nibbled audibly at the newly sprung grass. That last is one of the prettiest of outdoor sounds, I think. The world has to be very still to let one hear it at all, and then the delicate "crsh-crsh" is like the music of a fairy March accentuated by the regular moving of the light little hoofs over the turf.

One such morning comes back to me very vividly. I think it was that of my tenth birthday, and we had all been taken out to "Egeria's Grotto" to mark the festa. I wonder if parents know what a real birthday festivity means to an imaginative child? Mine came in the out-

burst of the Roman April, and, as long as we lived in the old Villa Negroni, was a perfect carnival of flowers. From the time I awoke in the morning, an air of joyous mystery pervaded the house. Every servant came to kiss my hand and bring me a fat posy, sent for to the country, of the strong farmhouse flowers that did not grow in our garden, marigolds and marguerites, jessamine and "gagia"— the yellow powdery blossoms that keep their perfume for fifty years, the whole tied up in a setting of sweet basil and "madre-cara"— I do not know its name in English — a feast of clean fragrance — "Cento di questi giorni!" (a hundred of these days) said every one I met on my way to my mother's room, for the first thing to do was to rush into her arms and have her tell me how old I was. Then, with a handkerchief tied over my eyes, I was solemnly taken into the big red drawing-room where the rest of the household was already assembled and led to the place where my portrait hung on the wall. There was a breathless second of expectation, then the handkerchief was whisked off, and I saw a bower of white spirea from which my own picture smiled down at me, above a little table covered with a white cloth and smothered in spirea, too. Under the foam of the flowers were all my presents, done up in my dear mother's favourite parma violet tissue-paper and satin ribbons. The next hour was an intoxication. It always seemed as if all the things I had been longing for for months were collected there. When everybody had been thanked, I was left alone for a while to examine and exult in my new possessions; then I had to be dressed in my best clothes for the real crown of the day, a walk *alone* with my adored mother, with my pockets stuffed with pennies so that I could give something to every

beggar we met! In the afternoon there would be a drive out to some point on the Campagna, with a box of bonbons to help us enjoy the view, and in the evening the beloved godfather, Mr. Hooker, always came to dine and help me cut my birthday cake, a splendid edifice with my name and the date in pink and white frosting, wreathed in spirea and surrounded by lighted candles to the number of the years I had attained.

As I grew a little older I preferred to spend the whole day in the country, and then the place to make for was the so-called Grotto of Egeria. There was surely solitude, where it seemed as if no one ever came but ourselves; the outer world was left a thousand miles behind; the velvet undulations of the lonely valley were all a carpet of short thyme over which we rolled like the little kids of the goats that scampered away at our approach. And, best of all, there was the deep grotto with the broken statue and the shadowy crystal of its mysterious spring, its sides and vault one mantle of diamond — sprent maidenhair fern, its moist air and soft green light — a reflection from sun and grass outside — making it a place where the most light-hearted child could not but feel the solemnity of something very ancient and very spiritual. I used to linger there to dream of Egeria, the more than mortal, less than spirit maid who revealed the lore of Heaven to the Sabine Sage. I could picture her pale beauty, as she would sit by the spring and let Numa tell her of all the perplexities and difficulties of his rule, and very earnestly did I beg her to appear to me too, but she never came; how could she, when that had never really been her home? Then I would leap back to earth with a bound and join my brother and sisters and the little playmates who always came with us, in a breathless game

which began with a mystic incantation I have never heard except in those days and in my own family. I should be glad if any one could enlighten me as to its origin, though I fancy it may have been an inheritance from some witch ancestress. Thus it ran:

"Intery, Mintery, Cutery, Corn,
Apple Seed and Apple Thorn,
Wire, Brier, Limber, Lock,
Seven Geese in a Flock.
Sit and Sing,
By a Spring!
O, U, T—OUT!"

For every word a head was counted round and round the hand-in-hand ring, and the unlucky one to whom fell the last one "Out" had to break away and fly, with all the rest in mad pursuit. Some distant point, generally the last ilex tree on the far side of the grove, had been fixed upon as sanctuary; if the fugitive could touch this before being caught, all was well; if not, he or she was at the orders of the others for any wild prank they might choose to command — three somersaults down a steep incline was a favourite one, while the victors looked on and cheered or derided, as the case might be.

Had our dear governess been of the Faith in those days as she was later, she could have told us more marvellous and romantic tales than we had ever heard about our storied playground — the "Triopius Pagus," * not only of Atticus and Annia Regilla, but of Cecilia and Valerianus, and Tiburtius, and all the valiant comrades

* "Pagus" signified "village." The term "pagan" was first applied to the dwellers in rural districts, who, from the remoteness of their surroundings, were tardier in hearing of and embracing Christianity than the inhabitants of the cities.

of Urban, and the immediate successors of his stormy pontificate. As it was, the classical landmarks were all that the Appian Way held for us, barring one spot, the "Domine, quo vadis?" of St. Peter, which had an unexplained fascination for us all. The Appian Way we loved for the sake of its endless beauties and for the monuments and ruins which were like a compendium of the history of Rome. A writer that I used to admire, though time has robbed me of his name, said that the things he loved best in the world were its high roads; that to look along one of these and know that it cut its way, in a clean swath, over mountain and plain, from one end of a continent to the other, was to be free to travel whithersoever fancy flew, no matter how chained and confined the body might be. The Appian Way, leading to the favourite seaport of Brundusium, a distance of rather less than a hundred and fifty miles, was the true road to Africa, to Palestine, and to all the eastern and southerly provinces of the huge straggling Empire. It was easier to sail the sea than to climb and descend the Alps; there are various records in history of a race, from some spot in the eastern portion of the Empire, run by accuser and accused, the one by sea and the other by land, each striving to reach the seat of power in Rome the first; and, in spite of the capricious storms and calms of the Adriatic, it was almost invariably the seafarer who won the day.

Starting from the milestone of solid gold, which Rome set up on the Palatine as the centre of the world and the point from which all distances were to be measured, the Appian Way ran due south, issuing, in the early days, from the Capena Gate, which was pulled down and lost sight of when Aurelian enlarged the city's precincts and

rebuilt her walls as they stand to-day. Fine walls they were, with their huge outstanding buttresses at short, regular distances from one another all the way. The recesses between them were deep enough to shelter a dozen houses, and were utilised, down to my own time, for the erection of strong wooden stockades within which riders and pedestrians could take refuge at the approach of a herd of the fierce Campagna cattle being driven to market either in Rome or in some town further south. The Roman oxen look mild and peaceful enough when, nose-ringed and weighted with the ponderous wooden yoke, they draw the plough or wagon; but the three-year-old steer, though he is one of the most beautiful creatures in the world, with his snow-white hide, his startled eyes and his widely curved, black-tipped, arrow-pointed horns, is a terrifying customer to meet in his untamed state and with a score or two of his companions!

It was forbidden of course to drive a herd through the city, but we often met them in our drives and rides. Once, I remember, riding alone save for a groom. I was exploring a winding lane, scarcely three feet wide and cut so deep that even from the saddle I could not see what lay on either side of it. Mooning along on a gentle little mare, perfectly happy with my own thoughts, I heard a cry from Tom, the good old English groom who was temporarily responsible for my safety: "Look out, Miss! It's them blooming cattle. Put her at the bank!"

I raised my eyes and saw a forest of horns, like files of spears, the first pair menacingly lowered, coming round a curve in the lane not twenty yards ahead of me. How we made the top of the bank I do not know — the mare quite understood the situation and was as nimble as a cat — but when we had dropped into the field on the

other side we were both very shaky, and I felt too meek to resent Tom's curt dictum: "The high road or the open after this, Miss! Them lanes isn't safe for the likes of you!"

He was not my own servant, only an employé of the one English livery-stable Rome possessed in those days, but if he had seen me grow up he could not have been more faithful and vigilant for my comfort and safety. He taught me to ride, and many a delightful scamper we had together over those ideal stretches of springy turf, but he never relaxed from his stern contempt of all things not British, and particularly of Latin equestrianism. I think that and the Englishman's incurable homesickness were too much for him, for a year or two later I heard to my great regret that poor Tom had lost his mind and had had to be removed to an asylum.

There are other animals, besides oxen, to whom it is well to give a wide berth on the Campagna — the sheep-dogs. They take their calling seriously and will let no stranger come within speaking distance of their flocks. There are two or more to each flock, and when they scent danger they send up a peculiar howl which summons the guardians of any others in the vicinity, so that before one knows it one may find oneself the centre of quite a mob of these formidable creatures, baying and leaping round one and thirsting for one's blood. They are exceedingly handsome, of a pure ivory white, with long silky coats and well-feathered tails, the head broad at the brow and pointed at the muzzle in approved sheep-dog style. Brought up at home, they show great affection for their masters and acquire charming manners, but as professionals, in the exercise of their duty, they are rather terrifying. They particularly distrust mounted visitors, and

it is more dangerous to approach them on horseback than on foot. Once, I was out with Dr. Nevin, the American clergyman, an old cavalry officer and an enthusiastic rider, who ought to have known every trick of the Campagna and its beasts, when we stumbled right into a flock of sheep, and the next moment we were attacked by five or six infuriated sheep-dogs, barking madly, leaping at our horses' throats, catching at the skirt of my riding habit and Dr. Nevin's long coat in the effort to drag us down from our saddles. The horses were badly frightened, but managed to kick quite judiciously, and broke away before either they or we had been hurt. We had a good run then with the dogs in full pursuit at first; then they left us alone and returned stolidly to their respective posts.

Talking of the sheep-dog, whom somebody has rightly called "that bundle of intelligence," I would note the fact that he has another delightful quality rather unusual in big dogs — humour. One of the quaintest incidents I ever saw occurred in a South Devon watering-place where we used to spend a good deal of our time. As the clock struck twelve, one fine summer's day, a large flock of sheep was driven in at the upper end of the town, through the whole length of which they had to pass to come out on the Exeter road beyond. One very old sheep-dog accompanied them, but just as they had passed the schoolhouse, the doors were opened and a crowd of little children tumbled out into the street. The dog saw that the sheep could make but few mistakes in the straight street, so he deliberately turned back and started to drive the children after them. Running round and round, barking peremptorily, pushing the stragglers into place, he got some fifty or sixty little ones into a compact mass, and

drove them along in the wake of the sheep. The children saw the joke and were immensely amused, but not one dared to drop out till the old dog, visibly laughing too, said good-bye with a bark and a wag, and bounded away after his own flock.

I have always wondered why the dogs that accompanied the goats, when they were driven into Rome to be milked in the morning, were not proper sheep-dogs, but rather mild-tempered mongrels of every imaginable variety. I suppose the real sheep-dog would consider it beneath his dignity to look after mere goats, despised creatures belonging to poor peasants! Nevertheless, their daily visit was one of the pleasures of my youth — when I was not too sleepy to get up and look out of the window towards six or seven A.M. Their coming was heralded by the soft tinkling of two or three bronze bells hung round the necks of the leaders of the flocks, and then came the quick pattering of the little hoofs over the pavement of the Piazza SS. Apostoli. They had their regular points of call, and that was one of them, in the angle formed by the side of the convent attached to the Church, and the small steep street which was one of the outlets of the Piazza. There they would stay for perhaps half an hour, in the warm brown shade, while the people from all the houses round ran down with mugs and pitchers which the goatherd, a handsome young contadino, in peaked hat, goatskin leggings, and scarlet vest, filled with creamy, foaming milk for about twopence a quart. I was often ordered to drink it, and the tall glass overflowing with warm ivory froth was such a pretty object that it made me forget the rather rank flavour of the draught.

Long before the goats came in, however, the silence of the dawn had been broken by the strange sad cry of the

"Acqua Vi" man, who, announcing his wares in an almost funereal tone, lured the earliest labourers and artisans, on their way to their work, to begin the day with a nip of spirits. He was followed by two "calderari," or tinkers, who must have had some secret feud, for they came along within a few minutes of each other every day on the same beat, and even Roman pots and kettles do not break down every day. One man announced himself in deep and hollow tones, his long-drawn "Calde-raro!" sounding like a passing-bell; the other was all that was gay and sprightly, and his cry was like a ripple of laughter, ending on an impossibly high note. Then there was the tramp cobbler, the seller of roasted melon seeds (bruscolinaro), the umbrella-mender, and I do not know how many more; musical, friendly, familiar, the old street cries gave a great charm to the morning hours.

At one time, in a certain warm spring and summer, I was taken with a passion for early rising, and with my mountain-born maid, Adelina, used to be out and away long before the sun was up, walking for miles outside one of the gates and enjoying every minute of the divine morning freshness. The infancy of the day is a very wonderful thing anywhere, but most of all in my own Romagna, where the glow of the later hours and the riotous colours of sunset have a ripeness which blends but too well with the ancientness of the buildings and the gilded tumble of the ruins that are, and always will be, Campagna's landmarks. But at dawn it is all young, bland, mysteriously dewy and immaculate, tint blending into tint, and shadow shaded through a hundred indefinable modulations of unborn blue and hinted violet and cloud grey, that will be plain gold later in the day. One of my favourite haunts at that hour was the

"Giardino Colonna" which stretches up in a series of terraces from behind the palace just across the square from the Odescalchi, to end on the Quirinal in Piazza di Monto Cavallo. On the lower level the gardens can only be approached from the house, with which they are connected by a series of little ornamental bridges thrown across a deep and narrow intervening street utilised as a mews for the palace, but on the hill an imposing iron gateway, topped by the gilt crown and column which are the arms of the "Lustrissima Casa Colonna," gives access to a paradise of trees and flowers and fountains which is the more delightful because so unexpected in the very heart of the city.

Italian gardens, though generally planned to give one imposing spectacle of some kind, with great wealth of statues and marble balustrades and elaborate formations or quiet stretches of water, are rich in small sequestered courts of flowers and greenery; the people who seem to have cared least for privacy in their houses took pains to make many solitudes in their gardens. Doubtless the desire for shade from summer heats had much to do with the intricate — apartments, one might almost call them — which diversify the villas and cut off spot after spot in an absolute seclusion of high box walls and overarching trees, entered only by one small opening somewhere in the otherwise impenetrable hedge. And, incidentally, the screened shelter thus afforded has fostered the growth and all-winter blooming of more delicate flowers and shrubs than could have survived the sudden attacks of the "tramontana," in the open. The "Giardino Colonna" was full of charming surprises of the kind one remembers gratefully in the more arid stretches of life. One particular morning there remains very clearly

imprinted on my memory, a morning of June, when I was running about with my small half-brother and sister, feeling very much their age. I had lost sight of them for a moment, and in seeking for them broke into an enclosure I had not seen before. Two or three tiny terraces, bordered with old bas-reliefs, lay just touched by the first rays of the sun; a delicate mimosa tree, very feathery and fragile, stood within reach of the spray of a fountain that sent a shaft of diamonds high into the air; all around was a tangle of Banksia roses and white lilies, and an ancient sarcophagus of honey-coloured marble on the top terrace, overflowing with ferns, looked like a golden casket in the low sunbeams. Every branch and leaf and petal was pearled with dew and spray, and the fragrance of the flowers in that miraculous freshness of the morning was almost too sweet for mortal senses to hear.

It is so funny to see some of our brilliant decadents in art and literature trying to embody their ideas of the "*joie de vivre*" in pictures of wild debauch, in mad dances of painted girls and drunken youths, in reproductions of the entertainments invented to stimulate the senses of the old Romans and Egyptians — people already half dead with satiety and incapable of experiencing a single thrill of healthy pleasure. Five minutes of existence, given a young heart in a young body, on a summer dawn amid the flowers, outtops their crude imaginings of the joy of life as completely as the rising sunbeams outshine our poor artificial lights.

I have been afraid to ask after the "Giardino Colonna" of late years. So many other Roman gardens have been destroyed by the beauty-haters who rule the city that I am always expecting to be told that it exists

no longer. The great process of destruction has not been confined to Rome alone. Only the other day I learnt from a correspondent that the lovely Villa Doria at Pegli has been swept away to "make room" (in our half-depopulated Italy!) for a German soap factory! To the vultures of commerce nothing is sacred. All that is ancient and beautiful is an insult to the industrial nobodies, with their sordid past and their ignoble future. The more perfect a spot is the more it arouses their desire to destroy it and annihilate even its memory by using its site for the basest ends. After all, everybody feels more at home in a background suited to his complexion!

I spoke in another book * of some forgotten villas that my sister and I discovered in the vicinity of Rome. One of these has, I have reason to believe, escaped the notice of the modern vandal, and I have no intention of revealing to him its name or location. Lying far out of the city, in a depression of the Campagna, it is invisible till one is close upon it, and we had passed near it hundreds of times before an accident revealed its existence to us. The very road to it is unmarked on the guide-book maps, and even from the road little is to be seen through the iron gate in the high brick wall save a formal court overgrown with grass, and a long low house, of graceful architecture, but much defaced by time and weather. Something of a mournful dignity in its aspect attracted us, and my sister suggested that we should alight from the carriage and see if we could get in. After ringing many times at the iron gate, we saw an alarmed contadino regarding us suspiciously from a corner of the house, evidently uncertain as to our character and mo-

* "A Diplomatist's Wife in Many Lands."

tives. We lost no time in explanations, but promised him a lira if he would open the gate, whereupon he took courage, came and examined us more closely, and, seeing only two young girls with a private carriage and a respectable family coachman smiling in amusement at our enthusiasm, the guardian of the place relented and let us in.

Then we realised what we had found. That which we had taken for the front of the house was only its back, turned, Moorish fashion, to the public road. Its front, all balconies and arches and tall old windows, looked towards the southeast, and from the first terrace, with its supporting colonnade, the ground sloped away in ever-widening spaces of wild greenery intersected with thick avenues of ilex trees that twisted away and lost themselves in dells beyond our view. The house really stood high, and was placed just where an opening in the undulations beyond gave a wide view of the Campagna stretching away to Tivoli and the Sabine Hills; but a moment after stepping down from that first terrace the outside world vanished and we found ourselves in one of the dream-gardens of the Renaissance, where it seemed as if no foot had trod for the last hundred years. The ilexes, all untrimmed, had united in dense roofs over the grass-grown avenues; the syringa had everywhere so interwoven itself with the high box hedges that these were now three and four feet thick and all abloom in their impenetrable interstices with white stars of sweetest perfume, mingling with the white cups of morning glories, unearthly pure and scentless, like the love prayers of a little nun.

In ecstatic silence we went on and on, catching glimpses, through the rare openings in the green walls on either

hand, of broad enclosures all a riot of flowers and grasses in the afternoon sun. It must have been at least a hundred years since the sun had struck through the many-tiered roof over our heads to touch the brown soil, bedded down with the leaves and acorns of a hundred autumns, under our feet. The shade that never could be shadow seemed painted in — a viewless veil of clear grey-brown, broken to an oval of gold where an archway in the hedge let in the westering sun. I had gathered a handful of ilex acorns, those delicate gems of polished grey-green set each in its fretted cup of colder grey — when a turn in the avenue brought us to a standstill before a statue on a pedestal — a young god in very old, dappled marble, his arms stretched out, his head thrown back, as if calling despairingly after some vanished worshipper. The deep greenery rose in an arch above him, the green walls shrank back to make a niche; the clear, colourless light touched his face and limbs almost to life as we looked at him — and then his appeal was answered. From some unseen point close to us there burst forth such a torrent of heart-broken song as can only come from the throat of an Italian nightingale in the solitude of a lost Italian garden. The silver notes went soaring to heaven and fell back in a rain of music like audible tears. Then, from far away, a sister Philomel took up the strain, another and another broke in and linked it on, till all the air was a delirium of music, wild and sweet and thrilling — going up from the little brown throats, without money and without price.

The nightingales' hour had come, and we, poor human intruders, crept away silently and left the lost garden to them.

CHAPTER III

LAST DAYS OF THE APOSTLES

St. Peter's First Visit to Rome—Wide Scope of His Work—Rome Destined to Become the Seat of Ecclesiastical Government—St. Peter's Early Converts—Persecution of the Jews—Life in the Catacombs—Simon Magus and St. Peter—Peter's Return to Rome—Nero's Slaughter of Christians—Peter's Vision—"Lord, Whither Goest Thou?"—Preparation for Martyrdom—Last Epistle—St. Peter's Successor—Imprisonment of St. Peter and St. Paul—Scenes of Final Tragedy—Crucifixion of Peter—Paul Beheaded—Devotion of Their Followers.

THE perusal of the histories of Rome, both ancient and modern, inspires the reader with amazement, when he realises that, despite countless invasions, destructions, and changes, certain apparently obscure landmarks of events which took place in the city during the first century after Christ, still exist, uneffaced and unforgotten. Yet so it is, particularly in regard to those connected with the sojourn of St. Peter in Rome. The devout pilgrim may visit them to-day with as little doubt as to their identity as did his ancestor in the Faith nearly two thousand years ago. The Apostle's first visit to Rome took place, according to St. Jerome, Eusebius, and the old Roman Calendar of Bucherius, in the year 45 of our era. Among illiterate sectarians it was still attempted, when I was young, to uphold the theory, invented by the so-called Reformers, that he had never been in Rome at all. Our separated brethren have since grown more enlightened and do not like to be reminded of that contention, annihilated again and again even by their own historians, notably by Baratier, a Protestant divine who

published his "Chronological Inquiry" relating to the Bishops of Rome, from Peter to Victor, at Utrecht, in 1740, and by the learned Protestant Bishop Pearson, who had preceded him in the task of demonstrating incontrovertibly that St. Peter had held that See for many years. On the dispersion of the Apostles after the first persecution in Jerusalem, St. Peter had reserved the perilous enterprise of the conquest of "Babylon" (as the seat of empire was at that time called by the Christians) for himself, but there was other and nearer work for him to accomplish first, and it was only some twelve years later that he found it possible to carry out his intention.

In the meantime he had travelled and preached unceasingly in Asia Minor, where during those years he organised and held the Bishopric of Antioch, the third greatest city of the Empire. From thence he instituted the See of Alexandria, of which he constituted St. Mark the Bishop, at the same time decreeing that Alexandria should be the second church of the world, taking precedence of Antioch, which thenceforth ranked as the third.* There had evidently never been any doubt in his mind that Rome was to be the first, the seat of ecclesiastical government, long prepared for that destiny by the decrees of Providence, carried out, as sealed orders, by her conquering armies abroad, and by the perfection of her far-reaching yet completely centralised system of organisation at home. We all know that the actual computation of the Christian era is a slightly faulty one, owing to the great laxity and confusion prevailing in the chronology of the Empire at the time of the birth of Christ. But, this much is certain — that some twelve years after the

* Constantinople and Jerusalem were added in after times to the list, but only attained this honour bv the consent of the reigning Pontiff.

ascension of our Lord, St. Peter came to preach the Faith in Rome. St. Leo the Great (440 A.D.), in his splendid sermon on this subject, describes how the capital of the Empire, "ignorant of the Divine Author of her destinies, had made herself the slave of the errors of all the races, at the very moment when she held them under her laws. She thought she possessed a great religion because she had accepted every falsehood, but the more closely she was held in durance by Satan the more marvellously was she delivered by Christ." Then, after narrating the partition of the evangelisation of the world among the Apostles, he exclaims: "And dost thou not fear, Peter, to come alone into this city? Paul, the companion of thy glory, is still occupied in founding other Churches; and thou, thou dost plunge into this forest peopled with wild beasts, thou treadest this ocean, whose depths growl with tempests, with more courage than on the day when thou didst walk on the waters towards thy Lord! And thou fearest not Rome, the mistress of the world, thou who, in the house of Caiaphas didst tremble at the voice of a serving maid? Was the tribunal of Pilate, or the cruelty of the Jews, more to be feared than the power of a Claudius or the ferocity of a Nero? No, but the strength of thy love triumphed over fear, and thou didst not count them terrible whom thou hadst been commanded to love."

Would that some faithful companion had written down for us some details of that first arrival of St. Peter in Rome! Did he come by sea to Ostia, or to Parthenopeia, like St. Paul? That seems the more likely conclusion, as, given fair winds, it was the route usually taken from the parts of Palestine or Asia Minor. But what must have been his feelings when, from far off, he

first beheld the gorgeous, insolent city, towering in gold and marble on its seven hills, swarming with its two million inhabitants, of whose very language he was ignorant! Did some of the few brethren then come out to meet him, as they did St. Paul, later? If he entered by the Ostian Way, he must have passed quite near to the spot which was to witness their double martyrdom twenty-five years afterwards. All we know is that his intrepid soul was not affrighted at the wealth and splendour of the hostile city which he meant to win back to his Master before his own labours should cease. From that day, although he had to leave it again and again to attend to the churches elsewhere, Rome was his home, his especial fold, the centre of Christendom, and the Holy City of generations to come, since Jerusalem had forfeited that title forever.

It was not to the owners of Rome, but to the thousands of poor Jews who had been brought there as captives, that St. Peter first came to preach. Already they were the despised hewers of wood and drawers of water for their enemies, and had managed, very early in their sojourn, to rouse the ire of their Roman masters. At first the Christian converts in Rome were entirely drawn from their ranks, and the Romans called them all "Jews," and occasionally banished them, as I have said elsewhere, from the city, to that spot, near the Porta Capena, which afterwards became the headquarters of the Church through centuries of persecution. Here, at least, they could do as they liked, and no one seems to have taken exception to their commencing that series of widely spreading underground labyrinths known now as the Catacombs, and usually regarded, quite mistakenly, as having been intended solely for purposes of sepulture.

That was provided for as one of its great objects, certainly; but there were Churches where crowds could kneel together in worship round the tomb of some illustrious martyr; and there were halls and chambers as well, where, as after history showed, whole communities could live for weeks or months when it was not safe for Christians to show their faces above ground.

St. Peter had it from his Master's lips that he should follow Him in the manner of His death, but the day fixed by the Lord for that "birthday" (as the Christians called martyrdom) was hidden from him till almost the end. He was away from Rome when he heard that his once defeated adversary, the wizard-impostor, Simon Magus, was revelling there in the favour of Nero, and regarded by all as almost, if not actually, a god. The calling of the necromancer appealed strongly to Pagan sympathies at that time, and Nero was only too delighted to possess himself of the services of the famous magician. He showered gifts upon him, brought him to live in his own palace, and caused, or permitted a statue of him to be erected, of which the inscription attested his supposed divinity. So Simon Magus was the chief favourite, and was exercising whatever he had of unholy power, to make himself necessary to the Emperor and feared by the people. Although the fiercest of persecutions was raging, St. Peter at once came back to Rome to confront and confound the diabolical impostor, even as he had done in Samaria, years before, when he (from whom all traffic in holy things was named) offered the Apostles money if they would impart to him the power conferred on them by the Holy Ghost.

Nero, after reigning for five years with unusual mildness for those times, had, with the murder of his mother,

Agrippina, inaugurated a carnival of slaughter, and the Christians were suffering terribly. St. Peter hastened to sustain their courage and also their faith, fearing, as we are told, that the weaker brethren might be led astray by the skill of the magician, who, like all his kind, could sometimes command the powers of darkness and was able to supplement them by trickery when they failed him.

St. Peter feared for the flock over whom he had ruled in person for some twenty-five years, so, as St. Jerome and other great authorities tell us, he made all the speed he could, and arrived in Rome to find the persecution at its height. It was at this time that she who had been Peter's wife in his youth, but whom, ever since the hour when he was called by the Lord, he had regarded as a sister, and who had followed to minister to him in his wanderings, was led forth with other Christians to martyrdom. St. Clement of Alexandria describes the scene, and tells us that, as they passed before St. Peter, who had been blessing them and praying for them, his last farewell to this faithful woman was summed up in three words, "Oh, *remember the Lord!*"

All the love and longing of Peter's heart, all the tender memories of the Redeemer's blessed presence in their own house, were in the cry. She passed on, and won her crown first, but the Apostle had but a little while to wait for his. Simon Magus, crazed with pride, had promised to give the Emperor the most magnificent proof of his supernatural powers — he should behold him fly to heaven! Nero was delighted. A high and richly decorated scaffolding was erected, from which the Mage was to take his flight; a throne was raised opposite to it, whence his patron could watch his triumph; and the whole city crowded to the spot to witness and applaud.

Not far off in the crowd some poorly clad "Jews" surrounded an old man called Peter, who knelt and prayed — prayed fervently that God would confound the wicked and not permit His servants to be deluded by the snares of the Evil One.

The great moment came. After pompous orations and loud acclaims, Simon Magus leapt from the scaffolding — and fell, a mangled heap, at the feet of Nero, whose face and garments were sprinkled with his blood. He lingered for two or three days and then expired miserably. The superstitious Emperor believed that magic had been pitted against magic to compass his own humiliation and his favourite's downfall. Who was the offender? Then some courtier pointed out the grey-haired man with the tear furrows in his cheeks, now returning thanks to God, and from that time the doom of the Apostle was sealed.

Not at once did the tyrant's servants succeed in laying hands on St. Peter. The Christians, ready enough themselves to face martyrdom and rejoin the victors who had gone before, could not reconcile themselves to the loss of the beloved Shepherd of their souls, and urged him, with wild entreaties, to flee to safety. He was still needed, they said; it could not be God's will that the Church should be left desolate of his sustaining presence in such evil times. Sorely against his will he consented to leave the city, but, as he chose the Appian Way for his flight, it is clear that he only contemplated remaining hidden for a time in the subterranean retreats of the Pagus Triopius; had he meant to reach the coast, he would have taken the road to Ostia, emerging from the opposite and lower end of the town. In the very first years of his Pontificate in Rome, an edict of Claudius had

banished the " Jews " from the city and it is believed that St. Peter accompanied them in their exile to this spot, and he would naturally turn to it in an emergency.

But, a little beyond the first milestone, the Apostle's steps were arrested by a vision which must have filled him with joy and yet wrung his heart with memories of pain.* One came towards him through the dusk, bearing a cross. The never-to-be-forgotten eyes once more looked into his. We can almost hear now the wild cry of the Apostle —" Lord, whither goest Thou? "

" To Rome to be crucified anew," was the answer.

The vision faded away, and, with a heart breaking with joy and love, the Apostle retraced his steps and told the faithful of the Lord's will, now so clearly revealed. " The Prince of Pastors " had spoken. The hour for which His great vicar had waited so long was at hand — the martyrdom for which he thirsted, already prepared. The weeping brethren went out to see the place where Christ had met their Spiritual Father, and found there the impress of the Saviour's blessed foot upon the stone. Later a church † was erected at the spot, but at that time all that was possible was to cover the sacred footprint and mark the site for veneration. (This stone was afterwards removed to the Church of St. Sebastian, but a copy of it is still kept at Domine Quo Vadis.) Every trace of the history of the Faith was so inexpressibly dear to those loving hearts! One disciple,

* St. Ambrose, Sermo contra Auxentium, No. 13; Hegesipp., lib. III; S. Greg. Magn. in Psalm IV, Penitentiæ.

† Cardinal Pole, after much research, came to the conclusion that the site chosen for the Church of " Domine Quo Vadis " was a mistaken one, and erected a tiny circular chapel at another crossroad which he believed had witnessed the mysterious encounter. This chapel is a humble little building, only a few feet in diameter. St. Peter's question is inscribed over the door.

who must have followed St. Peter at a distance on that memorable night, found in the path a little bandage which had detached itself from his foot (were his feet sore and cut from the many weary steps that the saving of souls had cost him?) and this was reverently treasured, and a Basilica called "In Titulus Fasciolæ," and now known as the Church of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, was erected in after years to mark the spot and guard the humble souvenir.

All this happened apparently in the month of September or October. Within a year, at most, the mourning Christians, led by Clement, Peter's successor, put up the marble tablet — found in 1911 — a small tablet of greenish marble, on which these words were inscribed:

"Here the Blessed Peter absolved us, the elect, from the sins confessed."

But what a chapter of history had been written between! St. Peter returned to the city and disposed all things for his death. His first care was to write his second Epistle General, his last will and testament, and his farewell to the faithful. "In a little while," he says, speaking of his mortal body, "this my tent will be folded away, as was signified to me by the Lord Himself," thus evidently referring to the vision on the Appian Way. Only the words of our Divine Lord surpass in majesty and tenderness that last Epistle of St. Peter. Heaven was very near as he wrote it, the celestial melodies were already in his ears, the recent apparition of his Master had filled his heart with love and longing almost too great to be borne, but that love translates itself into the most tender parental care for the children he was leaving behind. With what tears and devotion must the letter have been received in the different Churches that had

known his care, when it came to them accompanied by the news of his death!

More important even than his farewell to his children was the matter of appointing his successor, the second of the long line of which our own beloved Pius X is the present representative. Although Linus had been for ten years St. Peter's fervent auxiliary Bishop, his right hand in the government of the Church, whose vast growth had made it necessary in turn to appoint Cletus as auxiliary to Linus, the Apostle passed over them and chose Clement to immediately succeed him as the Vicar of Christ.* Clement with his noble name, his great gifts, and his eminent holiness, was the man needed in Rome at that moment, and, as Tertullian and St. Epiphanius attest, was at this time consecrated by St. Peter and then solemnly installed by him as head of the Universal Church.

Then came the beginning of the end, but the first stage was a long and weary one. St. Paul, it appears, besides his reported share in the downfall of Simon Magus, had drawn upon himself the furious wrath of Nero by converting two of his favourites in the palace itself, one a concubine, the other a chamberlain in close attendance on his person. His doom was pronounced at the same time as that of St. Peter, though the manner of

* St. Clement was soon exiled to the Chersonesus, where he remained for several years before his martyrdom there, and St. Linus during his absence filled his place in Rome till the death of St. Clement and his own succession to the Pontificate. Hence, many historians call Linus the immediate successor of St. Peter. St. Clement occupied the Papal Chair for 9 years, 6 months and 6 days, and, whereas modern lay historians give the length of St. Linus' reign as one year, he reigned in reality for 11 years, 2 months and 23 days. The confusion of the various Roman calendars at the time of the birth of our Lord gave rise to the errors in the calculation of that event and others following it. Our own accepted date is on that account some years removed from the true one.

their end was not at once decided upon. St. Paul was removed from the house in the Via Lata (now the Church of Santa Maria in Via Lata) and, with St. Peter, was thrown into the Mamertine Prison, and kept there for eight months. The very name of this dungeon still brings back to me a chill of fear when I hear it pronounced, for to me it was the most terrible spot in all Rome. Deep under the eminence which is crowned by the Capitol is a chamber cut in the rock, unlighted, unaired, and lined with the huge uncemented blocks which date from Rome's prehistoric times; a prison dreadful enough by itself, but there is worse below. A square aperture in the floor, just large enough for a man's body to pass through, gives access to another dungeon excavated beneath it, a pit of blackness, where Jugurtha and many other poor wretches, condemned to die by violence or starvation, moaned their lives away, before it was honoured by the presence of the Apostles. They were let down into it by a rope, and the men who were lowering St. Peter carried out their task with such brutal roughness that they knocked his dear head violently against the wall, in his descent. The wall must have been less hard than their hearts, for it took the impression, and the mark has been kissed for close on two thousand years by the lips of ardent pilgrims. I remember touching it, when, as a child, I saw it first, and receiving the most extraordinary thrill of a living reality of some kind. There is now a staircase by which to descend to the lower prison, but in my early days there was only a rough ladder leading into what, in spite of the guardian's taper, showed as a black abyss. The place is thirty feet long and twenty-two wide, with a height of sixteen feet, and was often crowded with captives. We do not know how

many it contained when the Apostles (probably not on the same day) were brought there; stagnant water covered the floor, and fetid odours made the air a poison, but where St. Peter's feet first touched the pavement a spring of clear water bubbled up, and was running gaily when I visited the spot. We know that St. Peter and St. Paul converted and baptised forty-seven persons in this den, besides the two captains of their guards, St. Processus and St. Marcellianus, so that the little spring served for the most noble ends.

The damp cold of the dungeon is so deathly that the Apostles' lives must have been preserved as by a miracle through those terrible eight months. They had bidden farewell to the light in the golden days of autumn; they came forth to meet its blinding radiance in the dazzle of June. Quickly the news spread among the Christians, ever eager to hear how it fared with their revered Pastors; and already, when these had but just emerged from their dungeon, loaded with chains and under a heavy guard, the intrepid crowd had formed in procession to accompany them to their triumph. Their sentences were already pronounced. St. Peter, the poor Jew, was to be scourged and crucified; St. Paul's Roman citizenship forbade these humiliations; he was to be beheaded.

It is a long way from the Capitol to the Ostian gate and the Vatican, and the Apostles' limbs, cramped from long confinement, must have moved slowly and wearily over the Via Sacra, now, for the first time, deserving of its name; the heat at that time of year is overpowering, and the blaze of midday beat down upon their heads. At a certain point, about three-quarters of a mile from the present gate of St. Paul, the cortège halted and divided itself into two, and here the Fathers of all Chris-

tianity bade one another farewell — for the few hours which must pass before they should be reunited "in the Lord." The little chapel which marks the spot bears this inscription:*

"In this place SS. Peter and Paul separated on their way to Martyrdom, and Paul said to Peter, 'Peace be with thee, Foundation of the Church, Shepherd of the flock of Christ,' and Peter said to Paul, 'Go in peace, Preacher of good tidings and Guide of the salvation of the just.'"

The soldiers who had charge of St. Paul led him away to the westward, to a spot whither, as St. Clement gives us to understand, the Emperor Nero deigned to come to enjoy the sight of his sufferings. St. Peter's escort had been commanded to bring him to the Vatican hill, the old place for Christian executions, easy for the people to find, because of a very ancient terebinth tree which had stood there for hundreds of years and was a popular landmark. The murderers, when they were authorised ones, as in this case, always sought to give the greatest publicity to such executions, hoping (very much against hope, one would think) that the victims' courage would give way and fear induce apostasy at the last moment; or, failing that, that the sight of their torments would deter others from embracing Christianity.

So St. Peter, praying and rejoicing, was first scourged after the cruel Roman manner, and then both bound and nailed to his cross, head downward by his own request, since he said he was not worthy to die like his Lord. The blood that flowed from his wounds was gath-

* Taken from the epistle of St. Denis the Areopagite to Timothy, in which he narrates the incident and records the Apostles' words.

ered on linen cloths by the weeping Christians, who stood around him for the long hours he hung there.

The ancient antiphon which used to be sung on the Feast, thus describes the martyrdom of St. Peter:

"As they were leading Peter the Apostle to the cross, he, filled with a great joy, said: 'I am not worthy to die on the cross like my Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, while I was formed of the clay of the earth; therefore, my cross must show my head to the ground.'"

So they reversed the cross, and nailed his feet at the top and his hands at the base. While Peter was on the cross there came a great multitude, cursing Cæsar, and there was great lamentation before the cross.

Peter, from the cross, exhorted the people, saying: "Weep not, but rejoice with me, because I go to-day to prepare a place for you." And having thus spoken he said: "Good Shepherd, I thank Thee that the sheep Thou didst confide to me take part in heart with my sufferings; I beseech Thee that they may also take part with me in Thy grace for all eternity."

'Tis said that he repeated over and over in his heart that humble protestation, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!" And when at last his praying and blessing ceased, and the beloved face turned grey and stiff, they took him down, washed the stains away from those furrows that the tears of repentance for his denial had been scoring in his cheeks for nigh on forty years, closed the eyes that had looked on the Lord and had been such wells of sorrow and contrition, and buried his blessed body close by, in the stricken soil that the Romans had learnt to shun.

And "by the power of this other cross, raised in Rome,

Babylon became that day the Holy City, while Zion must forever rest under malediction for having crucified her Saviour. Rome may reject the Man-God as she will, she may shed His blood in that of His martyrs, but no crime of hers can avail against the tremendous fact accomplished in this hour; the cross of Peter has transferred to her all the rights in the Cross of Jesus,—it is she who is now Jerusalem."

. . . "This tribute of death, Levi knew it not; this dower of blood, Jehovah demanded it not of Aaron; men die not for a slave — and the Synagogue was not the Spouse." *

The Vatican crypt which received the body of St. Peter immediately after his martyrdom, was excavated under a temple of Apollo, the deity supposed to preside over public games, near the old circus of Nero. By the year 89 or 90 A.D., when St. Peter's fourth successor, St. Anacletus, became Pontiff, during the reign of the Emperor Domitian, one is led to suppose that this temple was more or less forsaken as a place of pagan worship, since Anacletus was able to "build," as the phrase runs, a tiny oratory, just large enough for two or three persons to kneel in, around the tomb of St. Peter. Here again, apparent accident served the ultimate designs of Providence in regard to this fore-hallowed site. The Christians desired greatly to deposit the Apostle's remains in the deep and secret excavations, already crowded with the bodies of martyrs, near the fourth milestone on the Appian Way, the vaults which had more than once afforded refuge to the persecuted brethren and to the Apostle himself. But with the persecution that was raging at the moment of his death, it would have been

* Dom Guéranger.

impossible to transport the body without attracting notice, so the nearest spot was chosen, regardless of the fact that it was in the close neighbourhood of a number of pagan tombs. As we shall see later, this humble resting-place was threatened with desecration in its turn, and was emptied of its treasure for many years in favour of the more distant cemetery.

The martyrdom of St. Peter attracted little notice except from the poor Christians who gathered round his hard deathbed, to weep and pray and receive his last blessing; that of St. Paul, the Roman citizen, was a much more public and popular affair. The intrepid band of disciples who followed him to the chosen spot on the Ostian Way, not far from the other (but divided by the slopes of the Janiculum), risked death more certainly in doing so, and some of them doubtless paid its penalty.

Before reaching the place of execution, St. Paul saw, weeping bitterly by the roadside, the holy matron Plautilla, one of his converts, who had hastened thither to bid him farewell and ask for his last blessing. As our Lord, on the way to Calvary, paused to speak to the daughters of Jerusalem, so St. Paul stayed his steps to console this faithful woman. He asked her to give him her veil, that he might cover his eyes with it when he was beheaded, and he promised that he would return it to her after his death. Plautilla, feeling scarcely worthy of such an honour, yet rejoiced to be able to serve him, eagerly placed her veil in his hands, while his jailers mocked at the Apostle's promise. But her faith and love were rewarded, and she beheld the beloved Pastor again with her bodily eyes, when, after his martyrdom, he appeared to her and restored the veil, all stained with his blood.

At the spot called then " ad Acquas Salvias," St. Paul

was tied to a pillar, and the executioner's sword severed his head from his body. The head, in falling, bounded away, touching the ground three times in all, and, at each point where it touched, a spring of clear water instantly burst forth and is still flowing. The first was warm as life-blood, the second tepid, and the third, icy cold. A Frenchwoman has written of this miracle as only a Frenchwoman could: "At the first touch, the soul has but just escaped from the body — that glorious head is yet full of life! At the second, the shadow of death is already cast over those wonderful features; at the third, the eternal sleep has overtaken them, and, though still radiant in beauty, they announce that the lips will never open again in this world, and that the eagle glance is veiled forever."

The show is over, the Emperor is borne away by his slaves and sycophants, sulky, perhaps, at not having seen more blood or greater wonders. But the destruction of Simon Magus and the alienation of his favourites is avenged. That is something to take back with him to the night's debauch on the Palatine. The vulgar crowd has followed him, and as the quick Italian night comes down, and the mists roll along the river, while the evening star hangs white in the low crimson of the West, the mourners gather up the sacred body and the haloed head, and hasten, as in St. Peter's case, to bury the martyr close by, in a bit of land owned by the noble matron Lucina, who, years later, built on it a splendid tomb for his earthly resting-place.

CHAPTER IV

ROMAN YESTERDAYS

The Gods of the Roman World—Leaven of Christianity—Measures of the Emperors Against the Christians—Nine General Persecutions—Mad Extremes of Heliogabalus—Rescue of the Bodies of the Apostles—Tragic History of the Appian Way—The Joys of Solitude—How Marion Crawford Became the Master of San Niccola—A Solitude of Relaxation and Quiet—A Secluded Garden on the River in Rome—The Contrasts of Life and the Happiness in Hoping—An Artist's Festival—How a Roman Emperor Looked.

FEW things in the records of the past are stranger than the variations of attitude of the Roman Emperors (barring some hæmatomaniacs like Nero) towards Christianity during the first three or four centuries of our era, quite apart from the moral attributes of the Emperors themselves. One feels, through the edicts, the bored irritation of the rulers at having to trouble themselves at all about a few low-born individuals led away, as was believed, by a crazy illusion about another world, a life after this one, which they promised to all who would renounce the real pleasures — those considered as such by the great ones of the day and their followers — pride and power, riches, ambition, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh. "Surely," one seems to hear authority exclaim, "human nature may be trusted to fight for its own, against such fanatics! We have had our Stoics and their disciples, and no one had to legislate against them. All they claimed was the right to despise ease and pleasure, and to find their reward in the admiration or notoriety that they gained in the process. Their

very uncomfortable doctrines were never the cause of great social upheavals! What is behind this new teaching that men should be so excited about it?"

Then little by little there creeps in the sign of an unexplained fear, the sense of being confronted by a new mysterious power, great enough to be menacing to the old order of things, which, after all, had served well and should not be interfered with unnecessarily. Few of the upper classes, except in times of great trouble, really relied much on the protection of Rome's inherited gods, but all felt that their worship was a powerful weapon wherewith to control or drive the great mass of the people. The common herd clung tenaciously to the belief that prosperity followed on faithfulness to the old deities, and misfortune on any affront offered them. These tiresome Christians went out of their way to show their scorn of the very mixed crowd of gods and goddesses whom Rome had enshrined on her altars, and it was imprudent to seem to pass over such offences against the public taste. One ruler tries to suppress the Christians with a high hand; another suggests a compromise — he is willing to place the statue of Christ in the Capitol if they will show equal respect for the earlier residents there. No? Oh, well, let them be exterminated, then, since they are so bent on destruction! The edicts are issued and fiercely followed up, till even the persecutors weary of the diversion and stop as if for want of breath. But the edicts are not repealed, and they lie there at the disposal of bloody-minded governors or covetous informers, who desire to annex some Christian's estates or to possess themselves of beautiful Christian maids. Nine official general persecutions we count in all, spread over some three hundred years, but it must not be thought

that the Church had peace, except occasionally for very short intervals, between. The reigning Emperor might be a monster like Nero or Domitian, or a gentle-minded tolerant man like Alexander Severus, the streams of blood were made to flow with awful continuity just the same, owing to the enormous power placed in the hands of his deputies, the governors of the cities and provinces that made up the unwieldy Empire.

These fluctuations account for the many transportations of the relics of the chief martyrs to different hiding-places during those early centuries. For some hundred and fifty years the bodies of the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, reposed in the tombs where they had been first placed, and where they now lie, but soon after the accession of Heliogabalus to the throne, the reigning Pope, St. Calixtus, found it necessary to remove them to a distant and secret spot in order to protect them from the most revolting sacrilege. Heliogabalus, the maddest of all the mad Emperors, suddenly decreed that no god but himself should be worshipped in Rome. He built a gorgeous temple to himself on the Palatine, and as the pagan historian, Lampridius, tells us, made arrangements to transfer to this temple not only all the objects of worship most sacred in the eyes of the Romans, and regarded by them as talismans upon the safeguarding of which the destinies of the Empire depended — the fire of Vesta, the statue of Cybele, the Palladium, the Ancilia — but also " the religions of the Jews and Samaritans, and the Christian objects of devotion, in order that the priests of Heliogabalus should hold the secrets of every worship."

It was well known that the objects most dear to Christian devotion were the bodies of the glorious Apostles, and a hundred and fifty years of continuous pilgrimage to

their tombs had marked the way fairly clearly to those once secluded spots. St. Calixtus, it seems, was already preparing to remove the bodies when a new whim of the maniac Emperor caused him to do so with extreme haste. Heliogabalus issued orders for a great exhibition of harnessed elephants on the Vatican plain, and, to procure sufficient space for the show, commanded that all inequalities should be levelled and all the sepulchres, pagan or Christian, should be destroyed.

In fear and haste, St. Calixtus transported the holy remains to the Appian Way, already by that time honeycombed with subterranean vaults and passages. Above ground, the place was marked by the monuments of the Cæcilii, whose illustrious daughter was soon to lie below; but St. Calixtus feared that the existing vaults, now for the first time called "Catacombs," were already too widely known to offer complete protection to the precious relics; so he caused a new chamber to be dug deep in the rock, to the right of the way, disposing the only entrance to it through a well; and there he laid the Apostles, each in a separate tomb, to abide the hour of the triumph of the Church.

The Appian Way, with its miles of magnificent pagan monuments on the surface, and its far-reaching secret sanctuaries below, has in the course of time taken on something like a personality of its own. It is like a ribbon of marble laid across a sea of beauty even now, when the famous villas and gardens, overflowing with blooms gathered from every clime and shaded by groves of ilex and cedar, of palm and sycamore and cypress, have all been swept into the rich, soft mould; there you can look across twenty miles of waving grasses and wild flowers, broken only by some fragment still majestic in

ruin and guarded by the dark, slender watch-towers — memories of a later age, when the few scared shepherds had to fly from Hun or Saracen — that rise at intervals all the way to the sea. The solitude seems boundless, yet gentle and familiar; little blind winds come wandering across from the south and lose their way among the flowers; for the Via Appia leads due south, and one knows that it goes on into the war-ploughed Kingdom of Naples, that "hothouse of Saints and Sinners," with its fierce suns burning down on castles whose very stones cry tragedy, on scorching hillsides where the black grapes ripen into fiery wine, on flats seething in the heat under the man-high crops of maize. But near Rome, looking towards the soft green outline of the Alban Hills, all *that* seems illusion; this is reality, this empty space, untroubled by past or future, this sweep of dun gold and fading purple; its surrounding hills that all look towards Rome have seen the place unpeopled, seen it swarming with life; have seen it flaring with pomp and then submerged in blood; now they are guardians of that which modern cataclysms have failed to rend — the peace of a place whence even the memory of humanity is banished and Nature smiles and broods alone over her lovely handiwork.

Often I have longed to withdraw for a time to one of those lonely watch-towers to "think things out." We Crawfords have never been able to see a really solitary spot without wanting it for our own. A certain empty tomb lost among the Umbrian hills, with the sun turning the red rock to gold and the wild camomile swaying its yellow blossoms in the breeze over the doorway, has been a haven of my spirit through many a breathless, overpeopled hour. I could fly there in mind, for days at a

time, into an atmosphere of such still liberty as is only granted to disembodied souls. My dear brother Marion could never resist the call of fortressed solitudes. The story of how he became the master of San Niccola in Calabria is too characteristic not to be told in this connection. San Niccola is an Angevin castle, with walls twenty feet thick in places, perched on the rocks over an inhospitable little bay on the coast of Calabria, a bay too small and shallow to permit of sailing vessels being anchored inside its natural breakwater of tumbled stones. Marion often sailed thither, and, leaving the yacht outside, would scramble on shore and linger for hours in the shade of the huge pile, weaving new stories and calling up pictures of the days when the cry would ring along the coast that a Saracen sail was in sight, and the inhabitants, snatching up whatever they could carry, raced for the nearest tower of refuge. San Niccola looks like a huge dark monolith, wide at the base and tapering slightly towards its truncated summit. It contained but two apartments, a vast square space, without windows, for animals below, and one great hall, as sparsely windowed as possible, above. In this it resembles most of its fellows along the coast, where "Carlo d'Angio," still almost a living personality to the people, planted them, at short distances from one another, for this very purpose.

It was a roasting hot day in August; the felucca (this was before my brother bought the *Alda*) was swinging at anchor in deep water, and the "padroni," Marion and my sister-in-law, were sitting on the rocks in the shade, after lunch — the hour when most people go to sleep, but always a particularly inspiring one to him and responsible for many of his quaint whims. Suddenly he jumped up

and announced that he needed a walk — he would go to the town — a tiny hamlet some miles distant — and buy — I forget what — fresh eggs for the morrow's breakfast, I think. Would Bessie like to come?

Bessie, dozing over a novel under the shelter of a huge pink parasol, scarcely thought it necessary to reply audibly to such a crazy proposition, but as Marion turned and walked away she signalled to the faithful Luigi to follow and look after him, which Luigi — with what groans one can imagine, just after the midday macaroni and in that blazing heat — obediently did.

The day wore on, the sun began to sink, and the evening breeze ruffled the water. The parasol had long been closed, the novel thrown aside, and Bessie was beginning to look anxiously landward, when the truants reappeared in the distance. As they drew nearer she could see that Marion carried in his hand a huge iron key, while Luigi, directly behind him, was flinging his arms up in the air in gestures of despair. As they came close, the gestures became those of beseeching deprecation, and she realised that he was trying to say, unbeknown to the "padrone," "It was not my fault, Signora mia, oh indeed, not my fault!" while Marion, a little in doubt as to his reception, stopped before her and held up the great rusty key, saying, "It's mine, *mine,* my dear, for the next thirty years!"

"What — this awful place? Oh, why did I let you go away without me?" she wailed. "What on earth are you going to do with it? — and what have you paid for it?"

He mentioned the sum — not a very large one, it is true — but Luigi, hovering near, pale and scared, whispered, with every appearance of sincere grief: "He could

have had it for the hundredth part of that, Signora! Alas, for the good money! But it was not my fault — there was no holding the Signore, and those assassins at the Municipio took advantage of him!"

To tell the truth, it was not the money side of the matter which distressed my sister-in-law so much as the prospect of being required to come and pass weeks at a time in this grim dungeon, without a single convenience of life, twelve miles from a market town, and of course lashed to the battlements by every Mediterranean storm. It took her some days to reconcile herself to the new acquisition — poor girl — but Marion had not made a mistake, after all. The family was not invited to San Niccola till he had made several journeys thither himself, with carpenters and materials, and when they did come they found that the lonely keep had been transformed internally to a quite possible dwelling — though certainly an inconveniently isolated one. Generally, however, he went there alone, to rest from everything connected with modern life, and he found it a fine, quiet place for writing in, at any rate.

I fancy that people who take such keen delight as we do in sympathetic and cheery society are probably the ones who most enjoy — and need — the relaxation of seclusion and quiet. I remember a curious nook that my sister and I discovered in Rome itself; we never told any one about it, and used to go there day after day to think the "long, long thoughts" of youth and make wonderful plans for the two or three hundred years we must have expected to live if they were all to be carried out!

From the Via di Repetta, on the right bank of the Tiber, we had noticed on the opposite side two or three

very old little houses, with tiny gardens formed on the projecting bastions of a fragment of ancient wall which must have been built to protect the Via Lungara from the periodical overflowing of the river. Over the low parapet of one of them we could see a few flowers, a lemon tree, and an oleander bush in bloom; the owners of the old dwelling were never visible, but we made up our minds to bribe them to let us into their deserted and alluring back yard. Once in the Lungara we had some little trouble in locating the house, as nothing of the river was visible between the closely-set buildings that faced the street, but after one or two wrong shots we found it — in the possession of a good-natured young woman who could not in the least understand why we should offer her a lira for the privilege of passing through to her "loggia," a place she evidently despised since, to our joy, we found that she never even hung out the clothes to dry there, preferring the lines which run from window to window on the upper stories of most of the poor houses in Rome. She led us across the brick-floored kitchen, opened a door and shut it behind us as soon as we had passed through, and we found ourselves in a tiny paradise of flowers and herbs interspersed with fragments of sculptured marble — a frond of acanthus, a whorl of tracery — and provided with a stone seat inside the parapet. The whole jutted far out into the river, whose rushing water filled the air with drowsy sound. A few jonquils were blooming white and yellow in the clear shade; the pot of carnations — every Italian woman of the lower class has one, which she cherishes jealously — was spilling over with huge red "garofoli," scenting the air with their spicy fragrance, and from the seat by the wall we could look up and down the river for a long,

long way. The coolness, the unassailable privacy yet open-air sweetness of it all was indescribably delightful; for years we used to fly there when we had something to think out; and when the new works for keeping the Tiber within bounds swept the little old houses and their wee gardens away we felt as if we had been robbed of a bit of home.

My dear sister Annie was usually the pioneer of our discoveries and expeditions; she was of a bolder spirit than I, and was ever on the alert for material for her painting, which was not always done with the brush. She shared in particular my love of things Etruscan. We used to fancy that we had both lived among the mysterious, beauty-loving people of Etruria some three thousand years earlier. Everything connected with them had a haunting power over us, and sometimes we used to put words to the scenes on the vases and act them out with much fidelity for our own satisfaction. Only one friend was admitted to share these archaic sympathies and diversions; if these lines ever fall under "Minnie's" eyes, will she remember one notable night when she and Annie acted the parts of the devoted maidens, in clinging drapery and fillet-bound hair, who rescued the beautiful young warrior — myself — from the hideous fate decreed for him by the (necessarily) invisible hierophants of the sacred fane in the wardrobe — the dressing table serving for the altar upon which he was to have been sacrificed? We were all three so overcome at the conclusion of the drama that we broke down and wept in each other's arms! "Le gioventù é un fiore che non ritorna piu!"

But those whose youth has been fed with colour and imagination and beauty keep young in spite of the pass-

ing of years. In looking back, those stand out as the real things — the prosaic grind of existence falls away and shows itself as mere illusion. After all, what would life be without contrasts? They are the chief elements of drama. They furnish all its spice. The blackest shadows prove the existence of the brightest sun. It is the people who have nothing to wish for who are to be pitied. The very poorest can dream and hope for some lightening of their lot; and when pleasures come to them — little tiny pleasures even — they enjoy them intensely; whereas those to whom nothing has been denied find life so atrociously dull that only a constant series of fictitious excitements enables them to bear it at all. Two men I know were walking down Fifth Avenue one day and paused to admire a magnificent diamond necklace displayed in a jeweller's window. One of them said, with a sigh, "What wouldn't I give to be able to buy that for my wife!" The other, a poor multi-millionaire, turned to him with a snarl of envious rage: "You lucky fellow! You have something still left to wish for!"

The best — in the way of mere pleasure — that some of us could desire would be to live some hours over again and see once more the pictures that filled them. There used to be a day in May when all the artists in Rome united to hold high festival out in the country, and — speaking of pictures — one such day comes back to me and claims its record. Nobody was allowed to know beforehand what the brotherhood was planning to do, but it was sure to be something very picturesque — and no wonder, considering the elements and facilities brought to bear on it!

All who could do so went out towards the appointed spot, the caves of Cervara, that morning, and we passed

so many vehicles on the road that we decided to turn off and make for our point across the turf, all unenclosed in that part of the plain. We almost forgot what we had come to look for, in the pleasure of moving soundlessly over the short, new grass which gave out a warm fragrance of mint and thyme as it was pressed by the horses' feet. The velvety undulations between which we threaded our way, shut out everything but the blue overhead and some glimpses of the Sabines, swimming like huge sapphires in a haze of airy gold. Suddenly, on the sky-line of a low ridge just ahead of us, a towering car moved into view, drawn by four white oxen, whose gilded horns were hung with wreaths of roses. The heavy wheels were smothered in roses too, scattering pink and white petals as they revolved over the newly-sprung grass. The sides of the car were all of fretted gold, catching the sun in a hundred lovely scrolls and arabesques; raised high on a gold and ivory throne sate — a Roman Emperor, his white robes covered with jewels, the laurel wreath on his brow, his smooth young beauty facing the radiant morning with bland immobile insolence, his dark eyes fixed on the horizon, as if seeing his empire stretching away till its confines were lost in the unknown East. Behind him two black slaves held huge fans of white feathers over his head to protect him from the heat; at his feet, on a swirl of panther skins, sate his favourite of the moment, a beautiful, lithe Greek woman, her golden hair crowned with roses, her bare arms covered with bracelets and gleaming like marble in the sun, while a score or more of lovely girls in classical draperies leaned over the gilt balustrades that sank, tier below tier, from the sides of the throne down to the upper ledge of the rose-wreathed wheels. Black

slaves in scarlet tunics led the oxen, urging them on with pointed gilt wands, and behind the Emperor's car, as far as one could see, followed a long procession of others, nearly as splendid as the first, crowded with all his attendants, gorgeous in raiment, grouped to perfection — and all, saving the ox-drivers, motionless as statues. It was a dream of Imperial times, too surprising to be real, till, as the first car passed close to us, one of the girls began to laugh and flung a handful of rose-petals in my face.

How those young artists had enjoyed themselves in planning and producing the marvellous show! Painting pictures on canvas is all very well, but fancy the delight of making them live, on such a background, before people's eyes — of handling all that superb material to embody visions that had haunted one despairingly for years, crying out to be used and shown! Upon my word, if I could start life over again and choose my own vocation, I believe I would make it that of a theatrical manager — an artist in flesh and blood!

CHAPTER V

A FEUDAL VILLA

Ancient Beauty of Villa Borghese—A Sylvan Siesta—The Woodland of the Borghese—The Heart of the Trees—The Borghese Anemone—Vintage Time in the Grape Countries—Tuscany, an Atmosphere of Purity and Calm—Bunches of Grapes Two Feet Long—Muscatels of Etruria—October Festivals at the Villa Borghese—Peasants of the Coast Towns—Picturesque Costume of the Albanese—Feast in the Private Garden—Fountains of Wine—Classic Chariot Races—The Passing of the Feudal System.

THE recollection of the artists' festival brings to my mind some festivals of other times, remembered by very few persons now alive. Next to those connected with the great religious anniversaries, the ones most appreciated by the Romans were, I think, the lavish entertainments given by Prince Borghese in his villa to celebrate the vintage, in October. The Villa Borghese, as every one knows, is a great pleasure park just outside the Porta del Popolo, but those who see it as it is now, exploited for the most vulgar commercial ends, and at the same time sadly neglected, can scarcely form an idea of its original plan and ancient beauty. Even in earlier days the fashionable crowd that drove there in the afternoon knew nothing of the remote dells and glades that lay lost in the great masses of woodland, of the meadows that spread beyond the woods, of statues and fountains shrined in the green and sequestered places that one might pass near a hundred times without becoming aware of their existence. It was one of the playgrounds of my babyhood, but even after I was grown up I sometimes made new discoveries there.

A FEUDAL VILLA

In the very dawn of my recollections there is the memory of one of childhood's long, long springs — when the days are all blue and silver overhead, and golden haze in the distance, and live emerald underfoot — when my old Maria used to convey me in the morning all the way from Villa Negroni on the Esquiline to Villa Borghese at Porta del Popolo, there to play in the grass till the sun began to sink towards St. Peter's. I was three years old, and there was as yet no all-important baby brother to whose existence my own was to be subordinated a year later. Nobody had yet started to train and discipline me, and each sun that rose shone through just so many hours of Paradise. To Maria I was sun and moon, and if I was happy she was happy, but there was one occupation that kept her busy hour after hour in the distant villa, while I rolled on the grass — the picking of wild chicory for her supper salad. I can see her now, bent double, her good-natured dark face quite flushed with excitement as she pounced on the tender shoots that cropped up everywhere through the turf, till the red handkerchief in which she tied them up would hold no more, and she would slip it over her wrist, pick me up in her arms, and climb the tiers of the amphitheatre to reach our favourite luncheon room, a clear bubbling fountain in the avenue of ilex trees which crowned the ridge behind it. Here, close to the fountain, we had our midday meal, with the birds singing overhead and the wind dancing through the ilexes so that the ground was all a moving arabesque of sun and shade — the sweet fragrant ground that I could dig my fingers into to bring up handfuls of the gem-like ilex acorns that I loved so much. When the meal was over and my little silver mug had dipped up a drink for me from the fountain, I used to fall asleep

in Maria's arms to her queer lullabies — "Fringa, fringa!" or "Io vorrei ché alla luna ci s'andasse in carretella per védé le donne di lassù!" It always seemed to me that I woke up when she stopped singing, and I could not understand why Maria, with her head against a tree-trunk, was snoring happily and had to be waked up herself. But our sylvan siesta had lasted an hour or two; the sun was no longer overhead, but streaming in floods of level gold through all the lower branches, turning the turf and moss into live velvet, and flushing the statues' pale cheeks to a semblance of life. Then, with many a halt for gathering anemones and violets, and some running away on my part to hide in the intricacies of the marble grottoes which burrow behind the rococo temple fountain at the first parting of the great avenue, we wandered towards the entrance, avoiding the avenue itself and threading our way through the little woods, till we came out by "Napoleon's Tomb"— the exact copy of the original one at St. Helena, weeping willow and all — till the great iron gates came in sight, and we had to re-enter the city again. Sometimes Maria was instructed to bring me back to Nazzarri's, in the Piazza di Spagna, in the middle of the day, for a solid meal; and then, scorning the "filet" which dear old Madame Nazzarri had had specially cooked for me, I used to persuade Maria to "trade" it for her own lunch, which I liked much better —"pane sott' olio," pieces of coarse casareccio bread sliced up in oil and vinegar, a favourite dish among the poorer classes to this day. Of course these little vagaries were most reprehensible and were never referred to at home — Maria's conscience concerning itself with one thing only — my three-year-old will and pleasure! I believe she had a husband and son

somewhere, and I know her old age was cosily cared for in the country, whence she used to come at intervals long after I was grown up, with a basket of "ciambelle" in one hand and a huge bunch of pink roses in the other.

I started to speak of the villa and not of myself, but it was one of those places so inextricably entwined with the web of my own life that I cannot even now set it apart from personal associations and memories. I think it must have been there that I first made friends with trees — as trees. In our enchanted garden on the Esquiline we had cypresses — the most perfect in all Italy — orange trees and ilexes, and one or two flowering junipers, but no shade trees or bits of woodland like those in the Borghese, where the ancient oaks and chestnuts and beeches meet high overhead along avenues so extensive that to make the round twice in an afternoon was as much as most people ever did. As one drove through those avenues one looked down on the unexplored and ever varied fields and woods within the circle, and, whether in winter or summer, at morning or at evening, one could always catch some new and lovely aspect of light and shade; it might be of mossed foliage, all bronze and velvet, thinning off into a copse of saplings unfurling their veil of feathery green in some breath of wind that left the giants calm and unruffled; or it might be a screen of bare tracery rising from some ridge, in cool, neutral tints into the chastened blue of an autumn sky; or again the fervid umber of slender trunks and branches cast up against the pale lemon and chrysoprase of a winter sunset; the blessed trees sounded every note, clothed themselves in every tint that human love and passion know, from the fresh unconscious caress of childhood to the pomegranate outburst of first love — and

on to the gathered changeless riches of the heart's maturity — beyond which there lies nothing but dissolution and re-birth. I cannot explain these things; those who know them as I do admit the mystic relationship of some of us to the trees; they can suffer, as I do, when murderers slay them ruthlessly, can kneel beside the fallen monarch and touch his pitiful wounds, and murmur all our love and veneration to the great heart that never will feel the sap leap and surge again. One poet said it for us all, when he wept in the woods before dawn and cried:

" Great man-bodied tree,
That mine arms in the dark are embracing,
What magic of sympathy lies
Between dear over-beautiful trees and the rain of the eyes? "

It was in the Villa Borghese, driving round and round during the balmy afternoons of the spring before I was married, that my mother and I read William Morris's " Jason " aloud to each other, and never did a perfect poem have a more perfect setting. Where the lie of the land mounts a little towards the Pincio side of the Borghese, four avenues converge on a circle, in the centre of which is one of those broad lake fountains only to be seen in Rome, marble-rimmed and guarded by a group of marble sea-horses rearing and pawing round the tall shaft of water that bursts up from their midst. The carriage way is broad around the fountain, for here all the vehicles must pass, and the Roman world of my day prided itself on its shining equipages and thoroughbred horses. But all its pomp and brilliancy pales, at a certain moment of the spring, before the pink forest

of juniper trees that thrust their thick-set branches out, from the darker foliage behind, to smother the marble seats below them in one enormous wreath of rose-coloured bloom, a carnival of loveliness only to be matched by the cherry blossoms in Japan. Here we used to leave the carriage and make our way into the vast enclosures of meadow under the stone-pines, where the wild anemone hid all the grass under a mantle of vivid pink. The Borghese anemone was a real wild thing, very like the English wind-flower that shimmers all along the landslip and the undercliff where the spring tides are flinging the Channel surf in thunder against the cliffs of the Isle of Wight. Only the English wind-flower is pale and fragile, white or lavender for choice, and the Roman one is of a flaunting purple-pink, with a strong stem the colour of brown madder — as is fitting for a self-respecting flower sprung from a soil that has been steeped in sun and soaked in blood. And it has this peculiarity, unique, so far as I know, among wild flowers, that if you bring it home, in handfuls, as we used to do, and set it in water overnight, it will have grown many inches by the morning, every stalk stiff and proud, as if saying: "You thought I belonged in the fields, didn't you? No, indeed, *my* place is in a palace!"

Very different is the anemone of Villa Doria, far away across the city, on the Janiculum. It too nestles beneath the stone-pines, in the fine short grass, but it is a patrician bloom, each flower perfect, with broad polished petals of pure ivory or vivid scarlet or monsignore purple, diverging from a heart as black as jet. It is chary of growth and keeps close to the ground, and you must tread delicately or you will crush some yet unopened buds. It meant a good deal to some of us — I wonder if the

others remember? One did. Far away in China, just before my eldest boy was born, there blew to me across the world a film of Honiton lace, and when I spread it out, there was a garland of Villa Doria anemones worked in the red West Country that is the Italy of England, and sent as a greeting by a comrade of the vanished Roman days. Why don't we all die when we are young and sweet and true?

But to return — (for the —th time?) — to my very much strayed sheep — the old October entertainments in the Villa Borghese. Those who have not lived in them would find it hard to understand what that month means to the children of the grape countries. It is the very crown of the year in Romagna, indeed all over Italy. The heats of summer, the stifling languors of scirocco, are over and gone; the air is divinely cool and bright, and everything sparkles in a sun that warms but no longer scorches; the wind comes dancing over the mountains, like a song, rustling the trees and shaking little showers of bronzed leaves down on one's head. In the vineyards the vines were stripped of most of their leaves in August to let the grapes bake in the sun till their hearts are like syrup in the black tight-drawn skins. Now, if the year is a good one, the rain came after the Feast of the Assumption to soften and swell the purple covering to all but bursting point, and the few leaves that hang on the vines have turned scarlet and yellow, so that they look like huge gaudy butterflies hovering round the long pear-shaped clusters of fruit. The strong wilful "ceps" is like fretted gold in the sunshine; every bunch that is brought to one's table must be of perfect shape and have two or three inches of that corrugated stem to carry it by and two leaves at its head for wings; but

by the first day of October the mere cutting for market is over, and the real business of the vintage begins, when the great wains go lumbering down the alleys of the vineyard, drawn by meek white oxen who move slowly but plunge into the rich loose soil up to the fetlock at every step.

The vintners creep through the vine-rows, clipping, clipping with their clumsy shears, and tossing the fruit into the osier baskets strapped on their backs, while they sing the strange old songs that have been sung at the vintage since the days of Servius Tullius; the women's white head-coverings and dark blue skirts and scarlet bodices blaze out against the gold and green of the vine-rows, and as they carry their baskets — on their heads, after immemorial custom — to the man waiting on the wagon, they move with smooth, stately steps, like caryatides released from the marble. Towards midday the first wagons are full and go trailing up to the wine press near the house; the "treaders," the strongest of the young men, have been sitting on the stone bench in the shade, for their work is all before them and they have to keep limbs and garments clean. Now the wagon is drawn close to the vat, and the vintagers, working like demons, toss in a ton or two of grapes till the huge receptacle is piled high above its edges with a mountain of purple fruit. A ladder is set against it and the treader scrambles up, his bared limbs gleaming like copper in the sun, and the next instant he is a young Dionysus, leaping and dancing on that piled sweetness, chanting the song to which his feet keep time, while the rosy froth streams from the opening below into a second vat that ere long becomes a lake of dimpling crimson must, whose heady fragrance floats out intoxicatingly on

the October air. Ah, the good days! It would indeed have been a poor heart that could not rejoice in them!

More than once it was my good fortune to watch this almost sacred process in the villa where I happened to be spending the summer, and, though I am jealous for the glories of Romagna, I must admit that it is far more picturesque and attractive in Tuscany. The whole atmosphere there is imbued with a purity and calm unknown to the perfervid rollicking South; the hills are the hills of Umbria — of Perugino's and Francia's backgrounds, pale and clear, rounding into little knolls that are more silvery than golden when the sun kisses side or summit; the mulberry and the acacia and the olive throw fans of timid tracery against the elusive sky; where the olive rustles to silver in the breeze a thousand shades of grey delight the eye, and on every ridge the sparse spires of the Tuscan cypresses, so feathery slender that the tapering points are fragile as a fern's fronds, delimit the view in lines of dark delicacy most restfully symmetrical and definite. All is ascetic, yet tender, save where, far off on the plain, the low red wall of a city lies like a sword across the land. In the distance Umbria, with its clean, pale landscapes, so significant and lucent under the quivering dome of white, seems less of earth than Heaven, almost breathlessly impersonal, a country more for angels than for men; but nearer at hand she smiles at you, like some saint turning from the ravishments of contemplation to encourage a fellow-being whose vision is not clarified to behold what she has seen.

If you stand where I used to stand, on the terraced eminence of a Tuscan "podere," you find yourself at the apex of a net of deep and wide grassways, diverging from you in every direction till the lines are lost in a

froth of greenery, trained along avenues of mulberry trees that humbly support the airy garlands twenty and thirty feet from the ground. The trees are set with perfect regularity, but wide apart, and the grapevines fling themselves from one to another in sweeping curves that are a joy to see. In Romagna the vineyard has little beauty of its own, for the modern cultivator keeps his grapes within a few feet of the ground; often he pulls them up every year, stores them carefully, and replaces them in the spring. But further north the stocky stem is encouraged to grow and harden for all time; time bestows upon it the proportions and ruggedness of a tree; and the fruit, gloriously confident of its parent, throws out bunches sometimes two feet long; of incomparable fulness and flavour. Around Chiusi, in the heart of Etruria, the grapes are all muscatels, big globes of pale green jade, freckled with agate, and the perfume they distill is that of the white Roman rose — a fragrance indescribably exquisite, and individual to that fruit and that flower alone. In my girlhood there were times when I was not very strong; life was almost too full, and I had to rest from it sometimes. Then my angel mother would make me lie down in her favourite room, the one where the walls were rose and old-gold, and the ceiling a vault of mother-of-pearl seen through Tuscan grapevines, and she would set a bunch of those white roses and a tiny Venetian goblet of amber-coloured " Est-Est " beside me, and leave me alone for hours, while the fountain played in the courtyard and the Roman dusk came down and made shadows in the room. Then I used to close my eyes and play a little game, trying to find out which was rose and which was wine — and fall asleep before the point was decided — to dream that I was angel or butterfly — all

wings, anyway, free in a world where language was scent and music. Spoiling? Surely. But it was training, in a way. Why not develop all the senses that can help us in the long, long march of life?

There was nothing languorous in the Tuscan airs. Even in the hottest hour of summer one was eager, interested, glad to move about; and when early autumn brought the vintage, life simply bubbled in one's veins. I could stand all day watching the oxen crawling up those grassy roads between the trellised vines, with the splendid loads of grapes, or hover near the vats where the white-clad youths, who looked like Carpaccio's pages, danced and leapt as they trod the wine-press. We had to come away before the vintage was over, so as not to miss too much of the October loveliness at home, but the grapes followed us all the way. There was one station — that of Chiusi, I think — where the "ristorante" consisted of a little hand-cart with a high rail all around the sides; the rail was hung with hundreds of bunches of those scented, freckled grapes — two sous a bunch, if you please — and the vendor pushed it up and down the platform close to the carriage windows. It was a hot day, and never was fruit more welcome!

In the "spacious days" of the earlier part of the century the Borghese family, being, though not the most ancient, the wealthiest in Rome, used to mark the crown of the year by giving in their villa certain entertainments, intended chiefly for their own tenants, but the hospitality of which was extended to the entire population. The princely lavishness of these festivities resembled nothing

that I have ever heard of in modern times; it recalled indeed the days of Roman Emperors whose only claim to the throne rested on their popularity with the people. On the Sundays of October the villa was thrown open at sunrise, and from all the " castelli " of the Sabine and Alban Hills, and from the sea-coast too, the peasants, who had been watching all night (and in some cases all the previous day), having heard Mass, trooped in with their wives and families, to eat and drink and enjoy themselves. Those were the times when every district had its distinctive costume, and the dazzling effects of colour were such as we shall never see again. The coast towns are very Greek, and the dress of the Nettuno and Fano women is almost Greek still — a clinging skirt and close-fitting coatlet of vivid scarlet, the tint that makes the eyes swim and wince — imparted, by secrets of their own, to a cloth of such velvety purity and softness that it lasts through three and four generations, and cost them (it is probably unobtainable now) five dollars the " palmo " of ten inches — half a dollar an inch. The hair was worn in two long braids hanging down the back from under a small cap of the same cloth, set rather far back on the head, and cap and bodice and skirt were stiff with gold embroidery. The effect was magnificent.

Very different was the dress of the Albanese, with which, in a modified form, most travellers are familiar, since the women of Albano still have the privilege of nursing the aristocratic babies of Rome. Their costume consists of a long full skirt of flowered silk, pale blue or cinnamon colour, brocaded with red carnations or pink roses; the " busto " or corset, as well as the tight long cuffs that reach from wrist to elbow, are of that same scarlet cloth and trimmed with heavy gold braid; but the chief

beauty of the costume is in the fine lace of the voluminous "fichu" which is pinned low down in folds behind to leave the strong young neck bare, and folded in to the corset in front, over a camisole of finest linen, also much adorned with lace. The fichu leaves all the throat — such a column of ivory! — and some expanse of chest bare to rise and fall under half a dozen strings of dark faceted red coral, huge beads bought by the ounce and treasured for hundreds of years; the earrings are great danglums of dropping pearls, and the headdress a crown of ruffled ribbon three or four inches wide, set tight round the coil of braids and held in place by big pins of gold filigree, while two long streamers of the ribbon hang nearly down to the hem of the skirt behind. A lace apron, like that which Hungarian ladies wear with court dress, completes the costume, and nobody can quarrel with "Balia" for holding her handsome head very high when she wears it.

No greater contrast can be imagined than that presented by these two costumes, of which one or the other strikes the type all through Romagna; and the men, in old times, were as picturesquely clad as the women, though deprived of the gold and lace in which the latter delighted. Fancy hundreds and hundreds of these splendidly attired beings, with the beauty which is still the land's blessed heritage, streaming up the different avenues under those noble trees and then gathering in to the feast prepared for them in the private garden — a large open space laid out in variegated flower-beds of quaint design, and, on these famous Sundays, converted into an open-air banqueting hall where, at long tables loaded with good things, the crowds could eat their full, quenching their thirst at one of the fountains which ran

with wine from dawn to dark. None were debarred from sharing the Prince's hospitality, whether they were his own people or strangers, and the "plebs" of Rome, who poured out in thousands, were as welcome as all the tenants and labourers on his many estates. My dear old stepfather, who saw it all when he was a young man and described it to me, said that what most impressed him was the perfect order that prevailed all day, the Romans having the happy gift of being able to enjoy themselves without becoming riotous.

One of the great features of the villa is the "Teatro di Siena," the amphitheatre on the Pincio side of the principal avenue. The base is a green expanse of turf, from which rise several tiers of narrow terraces marked in white marble and also paved with turf. The summit of the circle is guarded by a ring of tall stone-pines which close it in and make an admirable frame for the spectacles of one kind and another which have taken place there. The prettiest I ever saw was the tournament given at the time of the Duke of Genoa's wedding, in which the present King of Italy, then a young boy, took such an animated part.* In the October days of which I was speaking a still more interesting show was provided in the form of chariot races, copied exactly from the ancient Roman ones, the charioteers, bareheaded youths in classical costume, standing in the gilt "bigas" and urging their teams to wildest speed round the broad racecourse, while the bands filled the air with stirring music, and the people stood up in their seats and yelled and cheered, and laid their money on this or that chariot, just as their ancestors did in the Coliseum or in Nero's circus two thousand years ago. Now, as then, the only official

* See "A Diplomatist's Wife in Many Lands."

reward for the victor was a laurel crown and the renown that came with it.

The upheavals of 1848 made an end of the old feudal ways and festivities; but, though it may appear incomprehensible to the philistines who rule the world to-day, they furnished mighty strands in the ties of sympathy and good-will which hold class and class together and keep a country sober, contented, and law-abiding. All healthy human nature needs healthy excitement from time to time, and, if that be unattainable, the craving is so imperative that it will find satisfaction in other and less wholesome ways.

Talking of excitement, one realises that the ancients, in spite of the good taste with which we usually credit them, would have participated only too joyfully in all our modern crimes of speed had the opportunity been afforded. The inscription unearthed at Pompeii the other day shows that they could be as callous as ourselves in the pursuit of pleasure. "To-day"—here follows the date—"a Roman Knight in his biga ran over our little Calpurnius, aged three years. May Pluto shortly have his soul!" One is reminded of the child at the East-end Sunday-school, who, being asked to define the meaning of the clause in the Creed which speaks of "the quick and the dead," replied: "Them that runs away when the motors is coming is the quick, and them that *doesn't* is the *dead!*"

CHAPTER VI

A CHURCH PILGRIMAGE

Church's Pilgrimage on the Feast of the Apostles—The Seven Commemorative Churches—The Byzantine Basilica of St. Paul—The Apostle's Tomb—Ostian Way, the Saddest of All Roads—The Tideless Sea—Call of the Unknown, Gorgeous East—Santa Pudentiana, the Site of St. Paul's First Abiding Place in Rome—Christianity in Early Rome—Priest Pastor's Story of the Pudens Family—Holy Relics—Story of the Crime of the Vico Scellerato—The Last of the Roman Kings.

FROM things of the recent past let us turn for a moment to follow a pilgrimage which the Church makes during the seven days following the Feast of the Apostles in June and in the course of which she draws our attention to the seven spots in the Eternal City most closely connected with their glorious end. These spots had been for long centuries points of attraction to the Christians who flocked Rome-wards from all over the world at that time of year, but it was not till 1743 that Benedict XIV, Prospero Lambertini of Bologna (and the fifth Pontiff born in that city of learning), laid down the order in which the seven sanctuaries should be publicly honoured.*

In a bull dated April 1, 1743, Benedict decreed that the various corporations of the hierarchy should take it in turn to honour the Octave of SS. Peter and Paul by

* Until the year 844 the Popes had continued to bear their own names after being elected to the Throne, but when the choice fell on a holy and humble man called Peter, he refused to keep the name of the Prince of the Apostles and chose for himself that of Sergvis—a renunciation which instituted the custom, followed ever since, of the Pope's selecting a new name on his accession.

proceeding in state to the Church designated for the day when a pontifical Mass was to be celebrated, with the assistance of the whole body of the Pope's Chair. These seven Churches are so bound up with the last days of our great Fathers in the Faith that in passing from one to another it is possible to realise very vividly the scenes of the tremendous drama enacted in the year of grace 67 during the last days of Heaven's patience with the tyranny of Nero.

Taking them in their order we will leave the Pope, according to his wish, to say his Mass in St. Peter's on the 30th of June, and follow the Apostolic Vicars, his "Assistants of the Throne," as they go in state to the Basilica of St. Paul without the Walls. Once that long road skirting the river was the most crowded of the approaches to the city, but that was before the Tiber, having gorged itself to congestion with silt and plunder, had turned aside to find another outlet, when the galleys could still be rowed up within sight of Rome and tumble out their freight of grain or marble or wild beasts on the quays that are deserted to-day. The Ostian Way is the saddest of all roads now; few ever pass over it; there is but one habitation between the city gate and the Basilica, nearly two miles distant. The river rolls, yellow and sullen, to the sea, through flat lowland, reeking with malaria from the swamps, where the fierce black buffaloes still wander at will, and vehemently resent the intrusion of a stranger on their domain.

The Basilica to which the Vicars Apostolic of Benedict XIV went in state was not the one which pilgrims visit now; in the early days it was the centre of a thriving little town outside the town, the suburb of Joannopolis, so called from Pope John VII, who founded and

fortified it as a stronghold for the defence of Rome on the side towards the sea. Built in the time of Constantine, added to through the centuries, ever more beautified and never defaced, those who saw it tell us that it was a perfect specimen of the Byzantine Basilica, nobly severe, making the impression of vast undisturbed spaces for worship, yet in reality a treasure-house of riches and art. Its mysterious destruction by fire, scarcely to be accounted for in an erection all of marble and stone, took place on the 15th of July, 1823, on the last night of the life of Pius VII, the Pontiff upon whom Napoleon had laid sacrilegious hands and kept in captivity over five years — a captivity that in years, months, and days was precise in duration with his own after-imprisonment at Saint Helena. Dates are curious things!

While Pius VII lay on his deathbed on that night of the 15th of July (the anniversary of his signing of the Concordat, twenty-two years earlier), he was greatly distressed by a dream which roused him again and again from torpor to enquire of his attendants whether some great calamity had not fallen on Rome. With the dawn came the news of the burning of the Basilica, but it was kept from him, and he passed away that day, without learning the truth of that which the clairvoyance of approaching dissolution had cloudily revealed to him.

Some fragments were saved and incorporated in the new Church which at once rose to replace the ancient one, of which the Sovereigns of England were, until the Reformation, proud to call themselves the titular protectors. The minute description of the original Basilica, left us by Cardinal Wiseman and others who had seen it, shows how, in all respects save one, the new one falls short of the earlier beauty and majesty; but the tomb of St. Paul,

the heart of the whole, remains to us intact, far below the level where fire or storm can rend it, and the very emptiness and bareness of the great Church above seem to enhance the awe inspired by that great sarcophagus in the crypt -- raised high from the ground of the deep vault, as on an altar throne, so as to be above the depredations of the Tiber even in the river's most uncontrollable outbreaks.

There, as far as human foresight can discern, the holy, weary relics will lie till the Judgment Day, resting after all the travel and shipwrecks, the cold and hunger and strifes of life, and from the hurried journeys on which they were carried hither and thither, in search of safety from profanation, after death. There is a loneliness of grandeur about the character and mission of St. Paul which, in these ends of time, have come to surround his grave also, and they suit it well. Often in my girlhood I traversed that desolate road between the city and the sea, and all the vitality of youth could not avert the shudder of cold and solitude that came over me in doing so, no matter how numerous and gay my companions might be. We used to drive out to Ostia in the spring, when the sea calls so alluringly to its lovers, and spend long hours under the pines that fringe the beach. The Tiber abandoned the old port long ago and twists itself into the Mediterranean a couple of miles north of its original outlet. In April the stretch of low rolling ground near Castel Fusano is all one field of wild jonquils that fill the air with perfume, and beyond them there is nothing but the long forsaken beach and the regular beat of the tideless sea. I stood there one day on a little rock as far out as I dared to go, with the waves breaking round my feet, and the west wind singing in my ears — singing

strange songs of far lands that were already beckoning me away from my Roman home. The sun had sunk towards them, leaving the sky a dome of green and citron, delicate and dim; the sea was sullen grey on the hither side, and floating opal in the west; and when at last I was called back to land, the pines leaned together and whispered dark things about the destinies of mortal maids who ventured to listen to the call of the Unknown.

And how it calls me yet — the Unknown that has just flicked its fringes in my eyes, wafted a ghost of its scent in my nostrils! There are two of us — I and my first-born — to whom Mother Asia still cries heart-breakingly through all the stress and all the staleness of life in the ready-made places. We began our life there together, the baby who opened his eyes in the white heat of an Asiatic summer, and I, who had passed from girlhood to motherhood at his coming; we two knew it, the air of the great plains that reach from Pechili to the Tundras, from Peking to Lake Oo-nor — and the Altai — the padding of the camels' feet in the dust — the smell of camphor and sandal-wood, and tea-brick — the touch of Siberian sable and silver fox, lighter than my kiss on his cheek, warmer than my arms around his body — the clang of the hammer on the bronze, the damp sweetness of the temple courts, the gleam of rough gold and the blue of the turquoise — the melancholy eternal splendour of the heart of Asia, the dear raw strength of it all, uncannily perfumed and terrifyingly sacred, as the scent let loose from some regal, balm-stuffed tomb! And we go back to Asia and follow the caravans starting for Nijni Novgorod, and talk with the merchants, and rest in our own fairy temple among the white pines of the western hills — for whole nights together sometimes —

and the next day return to our places in the cheap civilised world as if nothing had happened — and we never tell anybody where we have been!

But we must continue to follow another and more important pilgrimage. On the 1st of July, the "Apostolic Pronotaries" celebrate the Divine Mysteries in the Church of Santa Pudentiana, the sanctuary which stands upon the site of the house where St. Paul lived during his first stay in Rome from 41 to 50 A.D. It was the property of Pudens, the same, apparently, whom St. Paul mentions in his second Epistle to Timothy, together with Eubulus and Linus (afterwards Pope) and Claudia. Pudens was a wealthy Senator who eagerly embraced the Christian Faith and brought all his family and household into the Fold. What power they had for good, those masters of huge households, in the Rome of the First Century of our era! Doubtless, Pudens, like many others of whom it is consoling to read even in that age of gross selfishness and cruelty, had ever been a just man and merciful to his slaves; but what must have been the rejoicing of the poor bondsmen when he summoned them to listen to the Apostle and learn that Christ died for all, that He had bought for each one of them, as fully as for the greatest potentate on earth, an eternity of happiness in which they would be compensated for all the privations and sorrows of life! Think what that doctrine meant to the unfortunate creatures for whom not only life itself with no hope or intimation of a beyond, but every alleviation of their wretched lot, depended on the whim of an owner, who, if reasonable and kind himself, might at any moment sell or present them to an-

other, of the most cruel and savage character! Even to those of them who did not at once embrace Christianity the master's altered convictions must have brought intense relief and comfort, and, to those who did, it must have been like the rising of a sun of warmth in darkest, coldest night.

We get a beautiful glimpse into the home life of Christians in those days in the detailed story of the family of Pudens, left us by the Priest, Pastor, the brother of Pius I. The friend and host of St. Paul, having mightily aided the cause of the Faith, was rewarded, it is believed, with the crown of martyrdom, under Nero, but his son, also named Pudens, and heir to his virtues as well as his estates, vigorously continued the good work begun by the father, and brought up his two daughters, Praxedis and Pudentiana, in the love of God from their earliest years. Of the manner of his end I have found no record, though we may be sure it was a happy one; we know that by the time Pudentiana was sixteen, she and her sister were orphans, the possessors of great riches, and that they had vowed themselves to the service of God and His poor.

It was the privilege of wealthy Christians to provide fitting places for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries and for the assembling of catechumens for instruction, whenever a lull in the tempests of fast-succeeding persecutions made it safe for them to pray and teach elsewhere than in the Catacombs. Pudentiana, although the younger of the two sisters and scarcely more than a child when she died, seems to have been of a most valiant spirit, the one to direct and organise, while the gentle Praxedis, destined to survive her for some years, supported and aided her in all things. These two rich girls, in the flower of their youth, gave all their time to prayer

and praise, to charity and penance. "They desired," says Pastor, "to have a baptistery in their house, to which the blessed Pius not only consented, but drew the plan of the fountain for it with his own hand. Then, calling in their slaves, both from town and country, the two virgins gave liberty to those who were Christians, and urged belief in the Faith on those who had not yet received it. By the advice of the blessed Pius, the affranchisement was declared, with all the ancient usages, in the oratory founded by Pudens; then, at the festival of Easter, ninety-six neophytes were baptised; so that thenceforth assemblies were constantly held in the said oratory, which resounded with hymns of praise night and day. Many pagans gladly came thither to find the faith and receive baptism.

"Meanwhile the Emperor Antoninus, being informed of what was taking place, issued an edict commanding all Christians to dwell apart in their own houses, without mixing with the rest of the people; also forbidding them to go to the public shops or to frequent the baths. Praxedis and Pudentiana then gathered into their own house those whom they had led to the faith, and sheltered and nourished them for many days, all watching and praying. The blessed Bishop Pius himself frequently visited us with joy, and often offered the Sacrifice for us to the Saviour.

"Then Pudentiana went to God. Her sister and I wrapped her in perfumes and kept her concealed in the oratory. Then, at the end of twenty-eight days, we carried her to the cemetery of Priscilla, and laid her near her father, Pudens.

"Eleven months after, Novatus * died in his turn. He

* St. Novatus—apparently a brother or cousin of Pudens.

bequeathed all his goods to Praxedis, and she then begged of St. Pius to erect a Church in the baths of Novatus, which were no longer used and where there was a large and spacious hall. The Bishop made the dedication in the name of the blessed virgin Praxedis herself, and in the same place he consecrated a baptistery.

" But at the end of two years a great persecution was declared against the Christians, and many received the crown of martyrdom. Praxedis concealed a great number of them in her oratory and nourished them with the food of this world and the Word of God. But the Emperor Antoninus, having learnt that these meetings took place in the oratory of Praxedis, caused it to be searched, and many Christians were taken, especially the Priest Simetrius and twenty-two others, and the blessed Praxedis collected their bodies by night, and buried them in the cemetery of Priscilla on the seventh day of the Kalends of June. Then the virgin of the Saviour, worn out with sorrow, only asked for death. Her tears and her prayers reached to Heaven, and fifty-four days after her brethren had suffered she passed to God. And I, Pastor the Priest, have buried her body near that of her father, Pudens." *

There is nothing that could be added to the Priest Pastor's story. It is so complete, so loving, and so illuminating in the gentle charity with which it tells us that " Pudentiana passed to God." Not a word of her cruel death — we know of that from other sources, no complaints about the rampant hatred which made it necessary to conceal her body for four weeks before it could be laid beside that of her father in the holy ground of the

* This translation of Pastor's narrative is the one used by Augustus J. Hare in his " Walks in Rome."

Appian Way. All is told without a spark of rancour or an exclamation of grief — yet when Pastor buried Praxedis beside her sister, the loving circle to which he had ministered in their house was broken up, every member of the family was dead, as well as most of the friends they gathered there; the home had been raided and desecrated, and he was a marked man, holding himself in readiness for his end.

What strikes one particularly in all the stories of this time is the resolute veneration with which the Christians, in spite of all prohibitions, collected the bodies of their slain comrades and succeeded in burying them in holy ground. The bodies of Pudentiana and Praxedis were finally restored to their home, already consecrated as a church, and there we can behold at this day the phials in which they gathered up the blood of the martyrs. It was the zeal of the valiant Pudentiana in this work of love which drew down upon her the wrath of the persecutors and hastened her own death. A hundred years later the noble Cecilia, with her husband and his brother, suffered for the same cause, and what thousands had been immolated for it between! Nothing could daunt the Christian spirit in this regard, and it cannot but enhance the preciousness of our holy relics to reflect that so many of our forbears in the Faith preserved them for us at the price of their own lives.

There are some startling juxtapositions in the topography of old Rome. But a stone's throw from the venerable Church of St. Pudentiana is a spot which, when I was a child, was still regarded by the Romans as cursed, still known to us as the Vico Scellerato, though I do not find the name on the modern lists of Roman streets. It was there that was enacted the last scene of one of

the ugliest tragedies in the records of humanity, a story of crime so appalling that it has survived twenty-five centuries of oblivion, and is still told, with shudders of horror, among the poor people of that quarter of the city, even as the memory of the good Queen Tanaquil is still venerated for her virtue and wisdom. In these times, when so much instructive old material has been swept away to make room for the fads and futilities of modern education, it seems worth while to place the tale on record again. It opens (as did the history of Hipparchus) with a Greek, one Lucumo, who drifted to Italy in the days of Ancus Martius. Lucumo was the son of a native of Corinth, and, on landing in Italy, settled at a town in the heart of Etruria, called Tarquinii. Doubtless he found friends and countrymen there, for the Greeks were ever a roving people and, to judge by the Greek influence so visible in Etruscan Art, must very early have brought their love of beauty and skill in labour thither. Tarquinii was a walled city, five miles in circumference, as can still be seen from the remains near Corneto Tarquinii, the town which has replaced it. But it was not stirring enough for the venturesome Lucumo, and, moved perhaps by some such mysterious power as that which, centuries later, whispered in Alaric's ear, "Penetrabis ad Urbem," travelled southwards and came to Rome, bringing with him his beautiful Greek wife, Tanaquil, and all his goods, which appear to have been of great value. It was quite a caravan, therefore, which approached the northern gate of the city, and one can fancy the hum of excited talk among children and dependents as they paused to gaze at it.

At that moment a great eagle, flapping along in search of a Campagna lambkin for its brood in the Sabines,

hovered above the travellers for a moment, its dark wings spread motionless against the blue; then it darted down, and, snatching the cap from the head of Lucumo, soared away with it, while all gazed up in awe and consternation, wondering what the marvel might portend. In an instant another followed. The eagle, after wheeling aloft, swooped down once more and replaced the covering on the leader's head, then flew away and was no more seen. "It is a happy omen!" cried Tanaquil to her husband, "of this great city thou shalt one day be King!"

He found a warm welcome in Rome and so endeared himself to the inhabitants by his generosity and wisdom that when Ancus, the reigning King, died, they chose Lucumo to replace him. The new King did much to embellish and fortify the city, and Tanaquil, while sharing his state and councils, became the model of all Roman matrons, spinning and weaving the wool for the garments of her family, and clinging in all her ways to the old simple, frugal ideals; her distaff and spindle, and her woollen girdle, were preserved for many centuries, and ranked in importance with the "palladium" and other venerated insignia of Rome's power.

One day, as she was crossing the court of the palace, the Queen saw some of her servants gathered in a group, staring at some object on the steps leading into the atrium. On approaching she beheld a young boy of great beauty — Servius Tullius by name — whom she had taken into her service, lying asleep on the step, while a crown of lambent flame played above his unconscious head. The servants were terrified, but Tanaquil, versed in all the Etrurian lore of omen, at once perceived that he was to be a favourite of the gods. She told her husband that

the boy was destined to great glory, and Lucumo, ever heedful of her wise counsels, henceforth treated him as a son and educated him with the greatest care.

Lucumo, whom the Romans by this time called Lucius, had sons of his own, but the succession, still purely elective, was coveted by the two sons of his predecessor Ancus. Filled with jealousy of the young Servius, whose election as his own successor they feared that Lucius would procure, they laid a trap for the latter by requesting a private audience with him. When they found themselves alone with the King, now an aged man — he had reigned forty years — they basely murdered him and rushed out into the city to tell the people he had died suddenly, and to sway the populace to make them Kings in his place.

But so great was the mourning for good King Lucius when his death was announced, that the people gave themselves up to their grief and put the matter of the election aside. And Tanaquil, the wise woman, caused it to be proclaimed, in an hour or two, that Lucius was merely stunned and not dead at all, and that until his recovery should be complete he desired that Servius should fill his place. Great was the rejoicing in Rome, and with much alacrity the people put themselves under the orders of the young Servius, who himself in all things obeyed the noble Tanaquil. So, for many days, the government was carried on, and when the people had become accustomed to regarding Servius as their ruler, Tanaquil told them that her beloved husband had at last succumbed to his wounds, and that Servius Tullius would in all things follow his good example if they would elect him as King.

This they gladly did, and he reigned over them in

peace and honour for many years; but, alas! the bright portent of his youth no longer hovered over his destiny, and dark days were at hand for him and for Rome. He had two daughters, both called Tullia — the elder good and pure as Tanaquil, who had now passed away, and the younger with a heart full of evil and cruelty. These two girls their father had given in marriage to the two sons of his benefactor Lucius, in hope of securing peace to the kingdom by thus uniting the families. The two sons of Lucius presented the same violent contrasts of character as the daughters of Servius; one was a sinner, the other a saint; and marriage mismated them, giving the elder Tullia to proud, wicked Lucius Tarquinius, and her black-hearted younger sister to the good Aruns. The consequences were soon all too apparent. Lucius fell in love with his brother's wife; she responded to his passion; they two conspired to murder their lawful spouses, carried out their bloodthirsty plot, and then turned their attention to the removal of the aged Servius from their path to the throne.

Servius, sprung from the people, had made many enemies among the nobles by restraining their oppressions, and by championing the poorer classes, and the wicked Lucius found no difficulty in drawing discontented men into a plot to kill the King. They waited craftily till the height of the harvest season, when the able-bodied workingmen were all busy in the fields outside the city; then, gathering in force in the Forum, they installed Lucius in the seat from which Servius was accustomed to judge the causes that were brought before him. Servius was at once warned of that which was taking place, and hurried on foot from the royal residence on the so-called Cispian Hill; in haste to reach the Forum

and quell the insurrection, he took the short-cut through what is now the Via Urbana. At the end of this street he was met by a band of assassins who hewed him down and left him in his blood, lying right across the road.

Meanwhile his daughter Tullia had left her own home (now marked by the Church of St. Peter of the Chains) and bade her charioteer drive at full speed to her father's house, of which it was arranged that she should take possession while the slayers were despatching him. On reaching the Via Urbana the driver, aghast, pulled up his horses.

"We can go no further on this road, Lady!" he said, pointing to the body of the murdered King.

"Drive on!" she commanded.

"I cannot — without crushing the King's body," he protested.

"Drive on!" she cried, frantic to reach her goal, and the trembling man obeyed. The wheels bit deep into the yet warm flesh, and dripped and spattered her father's blood all along the road which the daughter followed to reach the stolen throne. And from that day on through all the ages the thoroughfare was called the Vico Scellerato — the atrocious road!

Tullia's son grew up to be "False Sextus," whose crime forced chaste Lucrece to take her own life. Then the people rose against the tyrants and drove them out, to die despised and in exile and never another "King" ruled in Rome till it opened its dishonoured gates to Victor Emmanuel in 1870.

CHAPTER VII

THE LATER EMPERORS

People and Scenes of the Corso—The Collegio Romano—Cardinal Merry del Val—Church of the Trinità dei Monti—A Picture of the Emperor Theodosius and His Son—The Other Boy Emperor, Gratian—The Usurper, Maximus—Nobility of Gratian—Finally Overcome by Treachery—Saint Ambrose—Fifth Day at St. Peter of the Chains—Two Christian Empresses—The Miracle of the Chains—High Mass at San Pietro—Latter Days of the Pilgrimage—View from Janiculum Hill—Michelangelo and Vasari—Michelangelo's "Visiting Card."

THE second day of July, if we follow out our proposed seven days' pilgrimage, brings us to a spot in the Corso which so hums and stirs with modern life that it is difficult for the imagination to connect it with antiquity at all. Not that the Corso itself has the appearance of a modern street by any means. Narrow and anything but straight, with great palaces and mean buildings crowding promiscuously and set as close together as possible — princely houses flanked by humble shops — with cross streets debouching into it every few hundred yards, and pouring forth a stream of traffic, spreading away here and there as if pushed out by main force, but yielding as little as possible of the coveted sidewalks, it is the real artery of Rome, pulsing with the life of a people who, from the days of Julius Cæsar to our own, have carried on existence in the open air. There the lawyers discuss their cases, the politicians air their opinions; the young men, at a certain hour of the afternoon, stand in long lines, like troops on guard, on the outer edge of the sidewalk, to ogle and criticise the women who roll

by in their carriages trying to look unconscious of the enfilade. But the morning is the Corso's real prime, a midday of spring for choice, when, from a cloudless sky, the sun in his zenith rakes the long street from the Piazza di Venezia to the Popolo without leaving so much as an inch of shade as a refuge from his fierce rays, except where the shop-awnings extend a merciful protection to foot-passengers. The flower vendors are everywhere, offering whole baskets of lilacs — the fat Roman lilacs — carnations, and roses for a franc or two, and eagerly offering to carry the burden home for one on the spot. The great ladies, who would rather die than be seen in the Corso on foot in the afternoon, are racing about in twos and threes, dressed as simply as possible, it is true, but with the huge diamond earrings, from which they never part, focussing the sunbeams, while their high-voiced, intimate chatter and proud faces express their complete contempt for and ignoring of any human being outside their own aristocratic circle. This is the golden hour for the dressmakers and milliners and jewellers, and their faces are wreathed in smiles as they fly about to satisfy the wealthy customers who make the morning their own. Few foreigners are seen; they haunt the Piazza di Spagna and the Via Condotti, the street of the jewellers, who work solely for them in Etruscan gold and cameos and mosaics, ornaments which no Roman would ever think of buying or wearing, though they are far more artistic than the Frenchified tiaras and rivières to be seen on the Corso.

A few minutes before noon the crowd thickens there near the Collegio Romano till it is hard to make one's way through it; the buzz of talk ceases, men get out their watches, and hold them in their hands while all

eyes are turned upward as if expecting the advent of some celestial apparition. Silence reigns for a minute or two; then it is rent by the thunderous boom of the midday gun at Sant' Angelo, and the next instant a babel of deafening sound has broken over the city. Every Church bell in Rome is ringing madly. The crowd cries "Mezzo Giorno!" with one voice, the black cone has run up on the flagstaff of the College observatory, and the watches have been returned to their owners' pockets. There is a kind of stampede to homes and restaurants for the midday meal, unless it is checked by the appearance of a squadron of dragoons clattering down the street like mounted suns, their helmets and breastplates shining intolerably bright, their big black horses pretending to paw and chafe in tune with the military band that follows them and which is filling the air with the joyous strains of a popular march that tries to outdo the pealing of the bells. Beside and behind the band comes every ragamuffin in Rome, marching delightedly, head in air, mouth open, and roaring out the tune; hunger and rags are forgotten for the moment and every beggar boy feels like a victorious general attending his own triumph.

Now the doors of the Collegio have opened to let out another great stream to join the throng — students of all classes and nationalities pour into the street. On certain days those of the Collegio di Propaganda Fide may be seen hurrying across the town to take their exercise in the suburbs. Here come Greeks and Copts, Bengalis and Chinese, crossing similar processions of fair-haired English and Germans, the latter picturesquely notable as they stride along, two by two, some forty of them perhaps, in the vivid scarlet cassock and hat which Gregory XVI imposed upon them to cure them of slip-

ping unnoticed into a "birreria" for a glass of their national beverage, and which costume has caused the Romans to give them the nickname of "Gamberi"—Lobsters! They make a great contrast to the English-speaking students, Scotch, Irish, American, and English proper, who wear sombre black or dark purple; but the form of the uniform is always the same, a long cassock with St. Ignatius' streamers reaching to the hem and flying from the shoulders at every touch of wind, every movement of the muscular young bodies. The whole is crowned by a wide, three-cornered hat, from under which the boyish faces look out roguishly enough on what the owners evidently consider a mighty pleasant world.

A young priest who lately returned from studying for three years at the American College in Rome, was telling me the other day what delightful recollections he had brought away with him, of the cheery home-like atmosphere of the college — of the wisdom and kindness of the Superior and his aides, and of all the merry larks that the American boys indulged in when study hours were over. A frequent visitor there was Cardinal Merry del Val, the most boyish-hearted of ecclesiastics; he took the greatest interest in their baseball contests, which he used to watch closely to learn the rules of the game.

The Cardinal's father was the Spanish ambassador to the Pope for many years, and the Countess was a friend of my own dear mother, who admired her enthusiastically. She was a highly cultivated and most holy woman, combining all the dignity of the old-time great lady with the gentle urbanity of a Religious; indeed, when she and her young daughters entered a room they seemed to bring with them that ineffable convent fragrance, sweet as the message of hidden violets, which one scarcely looks to

meet in the outside world. Their home was in the Spanish palace, from which the Piazza di Spagna takes its name, standing just opposite the splendid sweep of the "Spanish Steps," which mount in broad gradations to their crown, the towering Church of the Trinità dei Monti.

But I was talking of a warm spring morning, and that ascent should be made in the cooler hours. It is pleasanter just now to linger under some awning near the end of the Corso, and, looking down across the sun-smitten expanse of the Piazza del Popolo to the gate of that name, to muse on the processions which have passed through that northern portal of the city. There is one picture that returns oftener than others to my mind when I look at it, the picture of Theodosius, the great Emperor, entering the city in state, with his little son, Honorius, on his knee, and his co-emperor, the younger Valentinian, by his side. Rome, like some aged and neglected parent, was seldom visited by her Emperors in those days; their headquarters were fixed where great events were stirring — in Constantinople, in Ravenna, in Milan, or Treves. So the 13th of June, 309 A.D., marked an event long remembered by the Romans, the hour when they looked upon their rulers' faces for the first time. There was but one real ruler just then, however; his younger colleague and his little son were merely being trained to take their places when he should be no more. The cheering crowds were carried away by the sight of the princely child, as crowds always are, but some of the more thoughtful must have gazed — not too confidently — on the face of Theodosius, the strong, dark, capable Spaniard, so just and merciful in his calm moments, so violent in his angry ones that only his beloved adopted daughter,

Serena, dared approach him then. And, whether calm or angry, there was one memory that seems never to have left him, the memory of his brave, loyal soldier father, ignominiously put to death by the Roman Emperor whom he had faithfully served — on a charge so futile that it was not even mentioned in the order for his execution.

Yet, remembering, he forgave, and did all in his power to protect and help the Romans. His son grew up, alas! a mere shadow of a man, too weak and indolent even to be wicked, his short life a strange contrast to another, cut off in the flush of youth the year before he was born. Even with a son of his own to follow him, we know Theodosius never ceased to mourn the untimely death of Gratian, "the graceful," "the gracious," "the gratitude inspiring," as the orator Themistius calls him.

We have indeed one beautiful picture of Honorius, when still but a youth he entered Rome again, and again heard the Roman shouts as he passed on to the Palatine, standing in his gilded chariot, the sun resting on his dark head and playing radiantly on the great necklaces of emeralds that rose and fell in response to the joyful beatings of a heart still very young, still responsive at times to noble impulses, the people cheering him madly, and the women weeping for joy at the sight of his beauty. After that, all is darkness; his intellect, such as it was, was devoted to the most futile of pursuits — the raising of prize poultry! It was but a few years later that, on being told that "Rome had perished," he cried out in dismay, "What, my beautiful fowl?" And on being told that it was the Mother of cities, the Heart of the Empire, which had succumbed to Alaric, the Goth in-

vader, he gave a sigh of relief, exclaiming, "I thought you meant my bird was dead!"

Far different was the character of the other boy-Emperor, Gratian, the son of Valentinian.

There is something wonderfully appealing as well as pathetic in the story of this pure and high-hearted youth into whose twenty-five years of life there entered every element of the fierce mental and material conflicts that convulsed the world in the fourth century of our era, the century when Imperial children were used as shields and standards for the conflicting parties and were called upon to exercise the powers of government almost before they had learnt to read. Valentinian, bent, like those before and after him, on converting an elective sovereignty into an hereditary one, resolved on taking his son into partnership on the throne while Gratian was, by most accounts, only eight years old. As usual, the question would be decided by the army, or that portion of it nearest at hand, and Valentinian, having insinuated the idea into his soldiers' minds, found that they were not averse to it. Any such proceeding was sure to be welcome to them, since it was certain to be accompanied by the large donatives of money for the sake of which the Purple was so constantly changing wearers in those times.

Valentinian was at Amiens, and the troops, having been called together in the plain before the city, he presented the boy to them in a harangue full of spirit, reminding them that Gratian, from his birth, had played with their children, grown up with their own sons, and promising that he should be a worthy leader of such noble company. The bright, fearless child stood up beside his father on the tribunal, and the soldiers, forgetting ulterior motives, hailed him with real enthusiasm, shout-

ing, "Gratiane Auguste! Gratiane Auguste!" with all their heart. There was a great burst of trumpets and clash of arms, and then Valentinian spoke to the boy, so that all could hear him. It is a fine speech, the speech of a soldier, and short, as soldiers' speeches should be: "Thou hast now, my Gratian, by my decision and that of my brave comrades, been invested with the Imperial robes. Begin to strengthen thy soul to bear their weight. Prepare to cross the Danube and the Rhine, to stand firm in battle with these thy warrior friends, to shed thy blood and give up thy life itself for the defence of thy subjects, to think nothing too great or too little by which thou canst preserve the safety of the Empire. This is all I will say to thee now, but the rest shall be told thee when thou art mature enough to comprehend it." Then, turning to the troops, he ended by saying: "To you, my brave soldiers, I commit the boy — with the prayer that your love may guard him, your arms defend him, all his life!"

Valentinian's next care was to provide Gratian with wise tutors, and surely few youths were ever more favoured in that respect. The tie between him and St. Ambrose was as strong and tender a one as history has ever presented to our admiration. Gratian, in every circumstance of his short and stormy life, turns to the great Bishop for support and counsel. Ambrose never seems to have the young ruler out of his thoughts; the Saint's outburst of sorrow at his death is the cry of a broken heart. It all forms a chapter of most unusual beauty in the story of mankind.

Hardly less attractive is Gratian's affection for his other tutor, Ausonius, whom, even in the urgency of affairs and the stress of war, he never forgets, taking

time to send him a letter or a gift, remembering even the poet's harmless weaknesses, and making a long journey so as to assist in person at the investiture with the Consulship, which Gratian had bestowed upon him, thus crowning the highest ambition of the good man's heart. Yet, what a contrast the two teachers present! Ambrose, the "golden-mouthed" indeed, but inflexible, the unconquerable fighter for the independence of the Church, the judge of his Emperor Theodosius, whom he punishes — during eight long months — for the Thessalonian massacre, by forbidding him to enter the sanctuary till he has repented of his cruelty publicly in dust and ashes before its threshold — and Ausonius, the "tranquil and indulgent man, mild of voice and eye," rejoicing in the beauties of his lovely home by the Moselle, bringing the exquisite freshness of a summer morning before us as few others have done, his sincere Christianity all warmed and illumined by his born kinship with Nature and his gratitude to the Creator; yet so human in his fluttering delight at Gratian's favours, his innocent triumph when the young Emperor not only associates him with himself in the Consulship, but sends him the very purple robe embroidered with palm branches which the great Constantine had worn on the same occasion.

It is difficult to understand how the grandson of "Gratian the rope-maker" — that rough country lad who wandered into the Roman camp at Cibalæ in Pannonia to sell his wares, and so pleased the soldiers by his strength and audacity that they kept him with them — should have come to be the very model and ideal of a gentle knight, both in heart and person. He seems far more nearly allied to the noble Constantine, of whom he speaks indeed as a parent, but only on the ground of

having married his granddaughter Constantia. It was an age when the unending ramifications of the various Imperial families furnished more occupants for thrones than there were thrones to occupy, and in which a successful claimant could almost always find a royal bride with whose name to strengthen his own hold on power. Add to this multiplicity of true heirs the numberless usurpers who struck but for themselves, or those whom the different Legions raised to the purple for their own ends ("barrack Emperors" as our own great historian, Thomas Hodgkin, called them), and you have such a bewildering crowd of Emperors and sham Emperors, of usurpers and rival usurpers, that one can scarcely remember their names, and their histories only awake a passing thrill of pity for the violent ends to which most of them came.

One of the usurpers indeed (Magnentius by name) left an important, if disturbing, legacy to the world in the person of his widow Justina, a beautiful but not overwise Sicilian woman whom his conqueror, Valentinian, already the father of Gratian, took to wife. The story of her triumphs and misfortunes, of the obstinate championship of the Arian heresy which brought her into such a series of battles with St. Ambrose, would fill volumes, and one gathers that she was a great thorn in the side of her stepson Gratian, who, while obliged to restrain her as far as possible, nevertheless treated her with unvarying kindness and deference. One of the most touching incidents in the life of the boy Emperor is the fear and depression expressed in the letter in which he beseeches St. Ambrose to send him some good book from which he can draw faith and courage in the struggle lying before him, the subjugation of the Goths, who had rebelled against his Arian uncle, Valens, still the reign-

ing Emperor in the East. St. Ambrose responds by writing and sending his treatise "Of Faith," and from that time forth it is said that Gratian carried the little book about with him, studying it even in his chariot when on his travels.

These were never-ending, his vigilance driving him hither and thither, to settle disputes, subdue rebellions, to pacify his still barbarous allies or correct the misdemeanours of iniquitous governors of provinces. His actual reign only lasted seven or eight years, but very little even of that time can have been passed at the nominal seat of government, Augusta Treverorum, the modern Treves, at that time the finest and best fortified city in the Empire, and showing, even now, magnificent blocks of fortress long put to base uses, but in these days restored to the original ones by the energetic militarism of Prussia.

If Gratian was fortunate in having the holy Ambrose and the wise Ausonius to instruct him in the Faith and in the humanities, he was hardly less so in the military adviser who taught him the arts of war. The old Frankish general, Merobaudes, is one of the people I always feel I should have liked to know. He was as loyal as he was valiant and experienced, and the young Emperor reposed implicit and well-merited trust in him. But even his craft and courage could not save Gratian from falling a victim to treachery at last.

In spite of his elevated and attractive character, his prudence, his zeal, his clemency, there were two parties in the Empire of whom one remained and the other became irreconcilable to Gratian's policy. The first, though not the most powerful, consisted of the large number of Senators and nobles in Rome who adhered to the old

pagan worship with the tenacity of despair. It had never been proscribed, but its outward ceremonies were discouraged when they were not actually forbidden; idols had been removed from the public places where it was customary to burn incense before them, and in some instances revenues pertaining to the discredited faith had been diverted to other uses. The partisans of paganism, counting on Gratian's youth and inexperience, made repeated efforts to obtain from him some official recognition of the ancient religion, particularly in the matter of replacing the Altar of Victory, which Constantius, a zealous though Arian Christian, had removed from the Senate hall in the Capitol where it had stood for four hundred years. They also attempted to persuade him to take on the state and robes of "Pontifex Maximus," the head and high priest of the cult of the Olympian deities. Some of Gratian's immediate predecessors had been either indulgent or indifferent about such matters, and had now and then yielded a point to the old traditions, but the young and ardent Gratian looked upon these weaknesses with horror and met such demands with stern and uncompromising denial. When the hierophants who had besought him to assume the robe of the chief of their order withdrew, in sullen mortification, from the audience, their leader uttered a prediction which proved to be a threat: "The Emperor may refuse this honour, but in spite of him there will soon be another Pontifex Maximus." This was later construed into a prophecy, pointing to the usurper Maximus who, for the sorrow of the Empire, snatched the purple and held it for a while after Gratian's death.

This Maximus, a Spaniard of low extraction, was both the mouthpiece and the tool of the other and far more

powerful party in the Empire which had some show of reason for being discontented with Gratian's rule, the Roman Legionaries whose jealousy was aroused by his frank preference for his Gothic and Teutonic fighting men. The preference was fully justified; the "Barbarians," as the Romans still affected to call them, were brave, clean-living loyal soldiers, great fair-haired fellows rejoicing in feats of strength and in the display of rich ornaments on their handsome persons; they were far more sympathetic to Gratian than the decadent Romans, many of whom, as Hodgkin points out, were themselves the effeminate descendants of quite recently Romanised aliens. The parvenu is always the most zealous defender of the privileges of the class to which he has been undeservedly promoted; they made no secret of their discontent when the Emperor chose some big, genial Alani for his bodyguard and for many positions of honour and sent a couple of Roman Legions to improve their health and mend their ways in the sad isle of Britain.

It is amusing to read the wailing complaints of the exiled sybarites, condemned to what they considered a kind of convict station and quite the most miserable spot in the world. What, they, the flower of the aristocracy and the army, were to pass their precious time in dreary solitudes where the sun never shone, where grapes did not grow, and where the pay of an officer did not permit him even a decent glass of wine? Live under grey skies, on a soggy island cut off from the real world by most uncomfortably rough seas (the Latin is a wretched sailor to this day), where there was no music, no fun, and scarcely any pretty women — and, for their sole occupation, to have to keep the savage inhabitants from exterminating one another? No, it was not to be borne! And,

after the usual time had passed in ever more angry grumbling, the Legions revolted, deposed the absent and unconscious Gratian, and named Maximus Emperor in his stead.

Had the garrison of Great Britain alone been in question, we should most likely never have heard of their mutiny, but that was unfortunately not the case. The jealousy and discontent in Gaul and other portions of the realm had spread and smouldered till but a single touch was needed to make it burst out in a blaze. That was applied by Maximus, who now, with a large body of troops, abandoned Britain and appeared in Gaul at the mouth of the Rhine. Gratian, who had been subduing some hostile tribes, hastened back to his camp to find that a large proportion of his men had deserted him to join his rival. He could still count, however, on sufficient numbers to give him hopes of success, and one is glad to read that the good veteran Merobaudes was with him and that another brave captain, one Vallio, clung to him loyally in this great emergency. They found Maximus encamped near Paris, but all their efforts failed to draw him to do battle. The crafty adventurer kept the commanders busy with feints of attack and cleverly planned skirmishes, and utilised the time thus gained to draw the Emperor's men to desert, by lavish bribes and promises. At the end of a few days Gratian, who had no money wherewith to buy fidelity, found himself forsaken by all but his two old friends and some three hundred horsemen, and, in bitter humiliation and anger, turned to flee, hoping to reach Milan, the first point where he would have been able to pause in safety. The journey was a terrible one; the news of his disaster travelled faster than he did, every door was closed to him, and he could

scarcely procure food enough to sustain life. Meanwhile the pursuers, led by one Andragathius, his bitterest enemy, raced at his heels, and every day that passed diminished his chances of escape. But the faith and courage of which he had given so many proofs before did not leave him now. A hunted fugitive, forsaken and starving, he never wavered or repined. "My soul waiteth upon God," he said. "My foes can slay my body, but they cannot quench the life of my soul."

He was taken by treachery at last. As he drew near the city of Lyons, he perceived, on the opposite bank of the Rhone, a litter hurrying along escorted only by a few servants. Some one told him that the traveller was Læta, the beautiful girl he had just married, Constantia having died some little time before. He insisted on crossing the river — rushed to the litter — and was instantly caught in the arms of Andragathius, triumphant at the success of the snare he had prepared. Gratian was conducted, with some show of respect, to Lyons, where, with every appearance of sincere deference, he was invited to wear the Imperial Purple and to take his place at a magnificent banquet. He was not wholly deceived by these specious attentions, and asked his entertainers to give their oath that no harm was intended. This they did, most solemnly; Gratian, incapable of believing in their deliberate perjury, consented to their request, and a few moments later fell, stabbed to the heart, calling on Ambrose with his last breath.

The great Bishop had suffered agonies of suspense about his beloved pupil from the moment he had received the news of his discomfiture. He followed him in spirit on his flight, saw in mind all his suffering and danger, and was utterly broken-hearted when he learnt of his

cruel and untimely death at the hands of the usurper Maximus. But the bitterest moment in the Saint's whole life must have come, when, a little later, Justina, wild with anxiety as to the fate meditated for her own young son Valentinian (he had been associated with Gratian as Emperor, dethroned by Maximus, and was now twelve years old), twice prevailed upon him to travel to Treves and intercede with the murderer for the boy's life and for peace. The studied insults inflicted upon Ambrose by Maximus on that occasion were hard to bear, but we have it from his own lips that the internal trial of holding intercourse with the slayer of his beloved pupil was a furnace of tribulation, which at times threatened to overcome every consideration of policy and necessity, and for which the partial success of his missions in no way consoled him. For Maximus, after being foiled in his attempts to get possession of the person of Valentinian, decided that he had gone far enough in extermination and, being firmly seated on the throne, consented to let the boy appear to share it with him for a time. Of Gratian's two friends, Merobaudes and Vallio — the former, seeing a disgraceful death awaiting him, took his own life; the latter, apparently by the orders of Maximus, was privately hanged, and it was given out that he had killed himself in this cowardly manner because he — the staunch fighting man — was afraid of cold steel! The incident reminds one of the recent murder of the French Freemason, who, on his conversion to Christianity, became the victim of a similar fate and a similar calumny, inflicted by former associates. Even the Devil makes very stupid mistakes sometimes.

The walk down the Corso has indeed taken us a long way from our starting-point, the Church of Sta. Maria in

Via Lata, where over the now subterranean chapel in which the Doctor of the Gentiles dictated to St. Luke the Acts of the Apostles, the prelates called the "Auditors of the Rota" with the "Master of the Sacred Palace" (the Vatican) celebrated the fourth day of the Octave of the Feast of the Apostles. On the fifth day, in pursuance of the design by which each department of the hierarchy should in its turn honour the Princes of the Faith, the Pope said Mass at the Church of St. Peter of the Chains, assisted by the ecclesiastical body known as the Clerks of the Chamber. "San Pietro in Vincoli" stands on a rather lonely part of the Esquiline, the highest of the Seven Hills. The great poet of the Tenth Century, Adam of St. Victor, the author of some of our most beautiful hymns, compares the Apostles to the Hills, because the rising sun strikes them first and then reaches the regions below. On the spot where now stands the Church of St. Peter's Chains there was originally, according to the most ancient authorities, St. Jerome, the Venerable Bede, and others, a sanctuary dedicated by St. Peter himself on the first of August, in order to consecrate to God the month which the Romans had named after Augustus Cæsar, and which they devoted to his worship. Of the precious chains with which the sanctuary was destined to be enriched, those which had fallen from St. Peter's limbs in Herod's prison were still treasured by the Christians in Jerusalem; the others, in which he was to be led out to martyrdom, were perhaps not yet forged, for he was still a free man when he came to consecrate the Church on the Hill that looks to the east, and to fix August the first as a day of special reparation to the Almighty for the idolatry which that month saw the Romans lavish on a dead mortal.

St. Peter's chapel was still standing and attracted many pilgrims when, some four hundred years after its erection, it was enclosed and incorporated in the large Church we now know, called, from her who built it, the Eudoxian Basilica. The name brings before us two Christian Empresses, a mother and daughter, the elder the wife of Theodosius II, Emperor of the East; the younger married to Valentinian III, Emperor of the West. The elder Eudoxia * had made a vow to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and when she visited the Holy City, the faithful there presented to her the Chains of St. Peter, which she received with transports of gratitude, holding them more precious than the rarest jewels. Then, having venerated them with great devotion, she sent them as a gift to her beloved daughter Eudoxia, the wife of the Emperor of the West. The young Empress was in Rome at the time, and she at once took the chains to the Pontiff, St. Leo the Great, and he, to her joy and surprise, told her that in return for her piety he would show her the Chains with which St. Peter had been loaded in Rome. Apparently the Empress did not know that they had been preserved and venerated there ever since the beginning of the Second Century. It was some forty years after the martyrdom of St. Peter that the reigning Pope, St. Alexander, was made a captive, and placed under the charge of the Tribune Quirinus, the governor of the Roman prisons. Quirinus had a young daughter named Balbina, who was miraculously cured of a great sickness by touching the chains of St. Alexander. As she knelt in the transports of her joy, she could not cease from kissing and weeping over the blessed chains, and Alex-

* She is often called "Eudoscia," by historians, and was also named "Athenaïs," being the daughter of a famous rhetorician of Athens.

ander said to her: "Kiss not my chains, but rather go and find those of the Blessed Peter and kiss them!"

Balbina hastened to obey. The chains with which Nero bound St. Peter had been devoutly preserved by the Christians, and she had no trouble in finding them. With the Pope's consent she gave them into the keeping of Theodora, the sister of St. Hermes, the Roman magistrate who had been martyred under Trajan a few years earlier. Theodora seems to have deposited them in St. Peter's own little Church on the Esquiline, and we can infer that it was there that the wonderful scene described in the Roman Breviary took place more than four hundred years later. How one wishes one could have seen the fair young Empress in her straight Byzantine robe, stiff with gold and gleaming with jewels, kneeling with clasped hands, her eyes wide with wonder, in the half light of the old chapel, while St. Leo, not too absorbed in devotion to be keenly interested in his examination, as he was in everything that seemed worthy of attention at all — stood where the sun rays fell through one dim window, and, the chain from Jerusalem in one hand and the Roman one in the other, held them close together to compare and judge of them. As he did so, they touched — and then the marvel happened. Link sprang to meet link, ring welded into ring, and while the Pontiff gazed mute and awestruck, that which he held had become one chain without scar or flaw to show the point of union — the Chain still guarded, still venerated on the very spot where the portent occurred.

Eudoxia built a noble Church as a shrine for the relic; this Church was restored and added to as the ages passed on, and exactly one thousand years after Eudoxia's time, in 1477, Sixtus IV and his nephew, Giuliano della Rovere,

caused a splendid casket with bronze doors to be made and placed under the High Altar to receive St. Peter's Chains. There they now lie, and on the 1st of August, every year, there is high festival in San Pietro in Vincoli; the walls are hung from top to bottom with crimson brocade, the pavement is strewn all the way from the door to the High Altar with freshly gathered box sprigs, and their fresh, clean fragrance mingles with the perfume of incense and the peculiar sweetness that pure wax candles give out when lighted in great numbers close together. There is High Mass with solemn music and the celebrant and his assistant wear their richest vestments. The Church is crowded with worshippers and wreathed in flowers, and when the two Chains which became one in the hands of St. Leo are shown to the faithful, the sight seems to bridge the centuries for us, and fills our hearts with love and gratitude to God for giving us our first great Pastor, who bore them so rejoicingly for his and our Master's sake.

On the sixth day of the Octave the Pontiff said Mass in the Mamertine Prison, where the two Apostles passed the last days of their life on earth — the "Voters of the Chamber" assisting at the function. On the seventh, the chosen sanctuary was that of S. Pietro in Montorio, the spot on the Janiculum Hill where St. Peter suffered martyrdom. Its terrace porch, high on the side of the slope, is the one spot I know of from which all Rome can be seen, spread out like a mantle of jewels on either side of its yellow river and raising its classic hills in a wide semicircle against the shifting red and gold of the Campagna, the blue of the serrated Sabines to the east

and the soft green outlines of the Alban Mountains to the south. The vast perfection of the scene is almost more than sight can suffer; the beauty becomes a menace in some strange way; it is as if man had challenged the Creator to a contest of production. Exquisite as is the distant landscape, more lovely still is that huge city with its hundred domes tossed up like opals to the sun, its proud honey-coloured palaces raising tier after tier of fretted marble in noble and perfect outlines, its mediæval towers, windowless, huge, indestructible memorials of long past strife and carnage, standing like half-drowned breakwaters frowning on the tide of ever growing life and splendour that they have been powerless to arrest; the Coliseum crouches like a sulky monster at the foot of the Esquiline, whence St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran look down on it as the angels might look down on the dead; wherever a convent or villa lies along a ridge, the slender spires of cypresses mark the line, answering to every kiss of the breeze, though the dark velvet of their foliage refuses a single gleam to the sun; add to this the rush and sparkle of Rome's innumerable fountains, and you have a vision so matchless in beauty and so supreme in associations that it inspires an awe too great for delight.

Yet, splendid as it appears to us, how much more splendid must it have shone, externally, when St. Peter's dying eyes looked their last on the "Golden City" of Nero, teeming with its two millions of inhabitants; and St. Peter saw what our eyes are too dim to see, the victorious army of his martyred children already crowned in Heaven, the vast field which they had bedewed with their blood to nourish the seed of the Church — the miles of hidden sepulchres whence their bodies are to rise triumphant at

the Last Day; and the tears we are told he shed ere he died were surely tears of joy for the glory that was to be Rome's.

In the courtyard of the monastery attached to the Church of San Pietro in Montorio, the exact spot where his inverted cross was erected is enclosed in a lovely circular chapel surrounded by granite columns, the work of the great Bramante. The hole where the cross stood has never been filled up, but is left open to view, and, if you are one of the faithful, the good monk who shows it will give you a few grains of that consecrated soil to take home with you. The Church itself was built by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, and Michelangelo took great interest in it, going to the length of quarrelling bitterly with his friend Vasari about the design for the chapel which they had jointly undertaken to put in for the reigning Pope, Julius III. He desired to have there a fitting sepulchre and memorial for his Cardinal-uncle, Antonio dei Monti, through whom the obscure Tuscan family had risen to power and prominence. The sculptor, seeing with his mind's eye the statues he intended to place there, vowed that there should be no architectural ornamentation to detract from their effect; Vasari looked upon the statues as mere details of the ornamentation of the whole. So they quarrelled, both about the subordinates chosen by Vasari to carry out the work and about the work itself. Michelangelo won his point, the chapel was left austerely bare; the statues looked cold and lonely in it; and Michelangelo, who would have died rather than subscribe to an artistic falsehood, admitted his error and acknowledged that Vasari had been right.

He left some fine traces of his genius in the paintings now in other chapels of the Church; he supplied Sebas-

tian del Piombo with the design for the " Scourging of Christ," and Vasari tells us a quaint story about another picture there. It seems that the famous Cardinal San Giorgio had a barber who, in his leisure hours, had learnt to handle the brush and had become a fine artist in tempera, but who could not draw a single correct line. Michelangelo discovered him, encouraged him to persevere, and, wishing to give him a chance, made a very careful cartoon of St. Francis receiving the Stigmata, and told the barber to copy and carry it out in colour. This the humble painter did, very successfully, and his name, Giovanni dei Vecchi, has come down to us, with those of the approved artists of his day.

The incident leaves us with a delightful impression of the great-hearted genius, so patiently and kindly helping on an obscure disciple, and lends much interest to the painting which stands as a memorial of his condescension. There is another souvenir of him in Rome, which calls up a picture equally attractive — that of his wandering into the Farnesina one fine morning to have a chat with his young friend, Raffaelle Sanzio of Urbino, who was employed in decorating the sala of the exquisite little palace of the " Farnesina " with the immortal story of Cupid and Psyche. But the place was deserted. Messer Raffaelle had gone off to get his dinner, and Michelangelo could not have any of the talk he enjoyed so much. Looking round for something on which to write his name and let his friend know that he had tried to see him, his eyes fell on Raffaelle's palette and brushes, all charged with colour. Michelangelo snatched them up, and, laughing in his beard at the schoolboy joke he was perpetrating, mounted on a step-ladder and dashed in a great strong head on one of the yet empty lunettes.

It took him just half an hour, and then he ran away, chuckling at the thought of the young man's surprise and perplexity when he should return and see what some unknown visitor had done. But Messer Raffaelle was not in the least perplexed. There was but one hand in the world that could have drawn those bold, tempestuous lines. He refused to efface them, and the head is there to this day, a tribute to Michelangelo's humour and Raphael's reverence. They call it "Michelangelo's visiting card."

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE PILGRIMAGE

Final Function of the Pilgrimage—St. John Lateran—A Daring Climb—A Story of St. Francis of Assisi—Dante's Tribute—Rome's Ghetto—Yellow Banksia Roses—Fair on the Eve of the Feast of St. John the Baptist—Early Figs—St. Anthony and the Sucking Pig—Rome's Studios—A Picture of Hébert's—Hamon's Work.

THE sixth day of July closes the Octave of the 29th of June with a magnificent function, attended by the whole College of Cardinals, in the Church of St. John Lateran, the outpost of the Eternal City on its southern side. The Basilica faces in that direction and is the last building within the city walls, which still raise their crenellated barrier of Roman masonry between it and the Campagna beyond. This, the real approach to the Church, is very beautiful. The portico is surmounted by statues of the Apostles, which are visible from a great distance away on the Campagna, and is reached by a series of shallow marble steps, where, in my early days, many devout beggars were wont to sit and ask for alms. Below the steps and commanding a glorious view of the Campagna and its encircling hills, stretches a wide grassy terrace where we often walked up and down for a long time, at the end of an afternoon drive, thus following the example of many of the Popes, with whom this was a favourite spot, when in residence at the Lateran Palace. Distances are deceptive where spaces are so great; the grassy stretch never looked very vast; the feathery mulberry trees that grew under the old Au-

relian wall seemed almost within reach; but in reality were quite a little way from the green terrace. The wall always fascinated me because of its crown of small loop-holed towers, set near together and connected by a covered way that still looked practicable enough, although I believe there was no mode of reaching it except by scrambling up from the outside. In those days the sturdy ruin was covered with wild flowers and creeping plants, the long garlands of yellow camomile waving like strings of stars in the wind, some lovely things, whose name I never knew, sending out arm-long shafts of pink and purple from every crevice, two or three live-oak saplings finding good root-hold on the top, and every foot of surface covered with the velvety jewelled leaves and tiny lilac flowers of another little old friend, which I think the wise men call the "parietary" and which I found, true to its name, clothing whole walls of our temple home in North China. There the blossoms were much larger, and during the stagnating days of one scorching summer I used to pass hours in the deep, damp court where they grew, and discovered (what I suppose any botanist could have told me) that their strange lucency comes from a sticky liquid effused over the petals, which themselves throw out a network of all but invisible hairs; that flies and gnats settle on these hairs, get caught by the treacherous gum — and then are quietly sucked in and devoured by the flower!

It was always in my mind to make a secret expedition, with my adventurous sister, to that old Aurelian wall, when no one should be about, and somehow or other reach the top, but we never carried out that plan, though we did some pretty risky climbing in other ruins, notably at the Baths of Caracalla, where we scaled the very

highest point of the biggest arch and lay at full length — we dared not stand on a block of stone that rocked as we moved — looking down from the dizzy height on a world of tiny people and things below. Some glorious tufts of wallflower were our only companions and I remember how wonderful was that mass of fervid orange swaying in the sun, against the azure of the sky and the deep, dreamy blue of the distant hills. We went there many times — but at last there came a day when the authorities decreed that that particular bit of the ruin was so near falling that it constituted a menace to the remains below. It was removed, and some of the approaches to the other heights were walled up so that no one could risk life and limb upon them any more, and we never cared to go to the Baths again. Now, of course, there is no temptation to linger in any of the ruins, as the ignorant beauty-haters who took possession of our Rome in 1870 declared that the unique vegetation which adorned them was an agent of destruction and must be swept away. Every vestige of flower and shrub was rooted out, the poor old buildings became an eyesore instead of a delight, and the process of stripping off the kindly mantle which the ages had cast over their nakedness inflicted greater damage, the experts now tell us, than five hundred years more of age and weather could possibly have done. My dear brother Marion used to say that the world was peopled chiefly with fools and — blanked fools. What a charming world it would be if the blanked fools never got into power!

But to return to the porch of the Lateran and its devout beggars. On a certain day some eight hundred years ago, the Pope was walking on that green stretch just below it, followed by a silent group of Cardinals

and Chamberlains, silent because the Holy Father was evidently thinking hard about some high and important problem. Innocent III was a great and good Pope, but he lived in a turbulent age. During fourteen years of his reign two rivals, Philip and Otto, were rending Europe with their struggles for the supreme honours of the Holy Roman Empire; the Albigensian heresy was holding a hideous carnival of sacrilege, carnage, and obscenity in some of its fairest lands; Rome itself was the scene of ever-recurring battles between the great nobles, who would ride forth in the morning followed by great companies of armed men, on the chance of meeting an enemy or an enemy's retainer to kill. And with all this there were the vast affairs of the Church to govern, and many spiritual matters to regulate. No wonder that the Pontiff, walking in absorbed silence, and meditating on his course of action, should have been extremely irritated when a company of travel-stained, dusty beggars, disregarding the protestations of the horrified guard of officials, came straight towards him and cast themselves at his feet!

He looked down at them in frowning disapproval. What did such conduct mean? Their leader was a pale young man with dark eyes and a face lighted up with a very fire of enthusiasm. Like his companions, he was dressed in a coarse brown robe with a simple girdle, and his bare feet showed many a cut and bruise from which the ragged sandals had not saved them in the long tramp from Assisi down through Umbria and Romagna. For this was the Blessed St. Francis with his "little brothers," come to ask the Pope for leave to found a new order, the Order of Poverty. And the Pope scarcely answered him. Was it likely that these ragged, ignorant

tramps should have been chosen by Divine Providence to found a new family in the Church? Ah, no! — Innocent shook his head, reproved them for their presumption, and ordered them to retire.

They accepted the rebuke, withdrew from his presence with perfect humility, and laid their case before the Lord in prayer. The Pope, doubtless finding that the view from the green terrace had lost its charm at this squalid incursion, retired to his apartments in the Lateran Palace, and when night fell lay down and went to sleep. And in sleep his eyes were opened to that which had been hidden from them by day. He dreamed that a tender young palm-tree sprang suddenly from the ground beneath his feet and in a moment shot up to the sky and threw out strong branches on every side, forming a vast roof of fresh verdure under which millions of men found refuge and refreshment. Then he understood that the poor mendicants who had knelt before him that day were chosen by Heaven to found an order that should cover the world with a mantle of charity; and as soon as he awoke he sent messengers in haste to seek the little brown brothers — who were sure to be found in or near the Lateran Basilica, and bring them to him.

We all know the result of the interview. How the Pope lovingly received the brothers, but how strongly he protested against St. Francis' apparent imprudence in founding his institution on a vow of absolute poverty. How St. Francis refused to be shaken in his loyalty to his loved bride, the "Lady Poverty," and how at last the great Pope yielded to the great Saint, discerning that Heaven itself was leading him on this thorny path. So much has been written about St. Francis by heretics, unbelievers, and amateurs, from whose company he would

have fled in horror, on earth, who have bespattered him with their poisonous praises, who have each and all insulted him by the lies which they invented in order to represent him as the patron of their abominable errors, that a Catholic pen almost hesitates to write his blessed name. As one good man says: "He has conquered the world, and his victory would make him weep!" But he conquered it in another way too — in the way he intended. Travel where you will, to the very ends of the earth, and you will find the brown robes, the sandalled feet, the arms held open to the poor and the suffering and the despised; you will find the Sons of St. Francis toiling in the stoniest, roughest part of the vineyard, with and of the poor, praying for all men, teaching the children, nursing the sick, baptising the babes and the heathen, burying the dead, begging, more for their poor than for themselves, from door to door, leading the hardest of lives, yet always cheery and contented, the friends of all who need them, the "gente poverella" are indeed friends who never change or fail.

Of all the panegyrics of St. Francis, and of the "Lady Poverty," I think the one that Dante put into the mouth of St. Thomas Aquinas in the eleventh canto of the "Paradiso," is the most perfect and complete. And the description of St. Dominic in the next canto is its match. Here, Dante let his "great, grieved heart" have its way for once, and every line that he wrote about these glorious friends of God throbs with passionate veneration. Brothers in heart they were on earth, and he sees them not separated in Heaven. How one wishes that he had left us, in the two lines that are all he needs to paint an immortal picture, a description of their first meeting in the Church of St. John Lateran!

For it was there that they met. St. Dominic had had a strange dream the night before, in which he beheld the Saviour preparing to smite and exterminate the wicked — the proud, the voluptuaries, the misers; but His Blessed Mother suddenly appeared, and stayed His wrath by presenting to Him two monks: one was Dominic himself; the other, a poor holy man clothed in rags, whom he had never seen. Greatly exercised in soul, he went to the Lateran Church in the morning to ask for light and guidance. As he entered his eyes fell on a ragged mendicant who was praying so fervently that his face was all aflame with love and joy. It was the face Dominic had seen in his dream. He rushed to Francis and clasped him in his arms, exclaiming: "Thou art my comrade and my brother! We run one race, we pant for the same goal. Let us be united henceforth, and no enemy can conquer us!"

And so it was. These two suns of warmth and light, as Dante calls them, founded each his own great spiritual family, worked wherever their beloved Master sent them, in separate fields, but from that morning moment in the Church of San Giovanni in Laterano to the end of their blessed lives they were, as the old chronicle says, "One heart and one soul in God."

Of the riches and glories of the Lateran Basilica and the Lateran Palace it is not for me to write. The mere lists of them occupy whole chapters in the guidebooks and even there they have to be much boiled down, often only a word or two indicating objects and places of paramount interest to Catholic travellers; and these slighting mentions are defaced for us, even in such valuable and sweet-minded works as Augustus Hare's "Walks in Rome," by a question mark or an exclamation mark, in-

tended to denote ridicule, inserted after the word " miracle " or " relic," to show that the writer was anxious to be exonerated from any suspicion of sharing the pious beliefs of devout persons on such subjects. I have seen one or two Catholic guidebooks to Rome, but they were meagre and unsatisfactory, more pamphlets than books. If a really good modern one exists, I should be grateful to any reader who would tell me about it.

There are some very ancient ones indeed, compiled between the Seventh and the Tenth centuries, which were apparently well known and readily available for the pilgrims of the age of Faith, although, so far as I know, there are but very few copies of any of them in existence now. They are called the " Salzburg," the " Einsiedeln," and the " Malmesbury " guides, and must make interesting reading not only for their own sake, but on account of the actual descriptions of the city which has undergone so many changes and revolutions of its topography during the last thousand years of its history. The changes of the last fifty years have been perhaps the most surprising of all, considering that they were not brought about by the time-honoured means of war and pillage, but forced upon Rome under the comprehensive but sometimes mendacious name of " improvements." There was plenty of room for improvements, and where these have been genuine nobody would wish to quarrel with them, although even some of them were not needed, as claimed, for the health of the city. The Ghetto, for instance, was an eyesore — and looked, with its squalid crowds of rag-pickers and old-clothes dealers, as if it must be a hot-bed of disease. It was precisely the contrary. When the old pestilence or the new cholera were carrying off many hundreds a day in the better parts of the city, there was

not a single case in the Ghetto. My brother points out, in "Ave, Roma Immortalis," that the regulation confining them to that tiny district, from the gates of which they might not issue after dark, though intended as a measure of repression, was really a great advantage to them, in that behind those gates they were protected from robbery and violence and governed themselves according to their own queer laws without any interference from the municipal authorities. Certain industries they monopolised altogether. I remember that whenever a new carpet was to be put down in my mother's house, Lucia, the housekeeper, would send one of her underlings to summon "la Giudea" to sew it — and fierce old Lucia would never have let a Jewess cross the threshold had she been able to find a Christian to undertake the task! I was always glad when this happened, for Lucia's particular Jewess was a most cheery, sociable soul, who would sit on the hard stone floor all day making her huge needle fly in and out of the heavy carpet-stuff, and look up and shake her black ringlets and greet me with the merriest of smiles every time I passed through the room. Not only such coarse work, but all the finest of darning was entrusted to her. Some disastrous rent in new broadcloth — "un sette" as the Italians call it, because it always outlines the figure seven — would come back from her dark thin hands so deftly mended that it was difficult to find the place; did some careless guest drop a lighted cigarette on one of the satiny damask tablecloths — quick, send it to the Giudea and the Signora herself may forget that it ever was burnt! Darning and patching came to the women naturally, I suppose, seeing that the chief industry of the Ghetto consists in mending old clothes and selling them for new. Pius IX set the

Jews free from all the old humiliating restrictions of their life in Rome, but until the Ghetto was swept away by the present Government, they clung to it tenaciously, and no wonder, for it was their very own, a little fortress of Jewry where no Christian ever came to disturb them, either at work or worship.

With the inherited aversion and all the old traditions strong in us, we children of Rome never set foot there more than once or twice in all our lives. Our home was at the other end of the city, on the noble heights of the Esquiline, and almost all that we loved best grouped itself in that quarter. I have the most delightful recollections of the walk from Santa Maria Maggiore, our own Church, to the great free spaces round the Lateran. The last part of the way led through the Via San Giovanni, on the right side of which were scarcely any buildings at all, but only a long wall overhung, in the late spring, with masses of yellow Banksia roses, their trailing wreaths hanging so near our heads that we had but to spring and snatch to carry away big handfuls of the flowers, and what flowers! Yard-long arcs of ruffled honey tossed up against that Roman blue, every petal of the million a wing of translucent gold in sun and breeze; no stem, no foliage visible through the crowded blooms, except where the trailers tapered to the last tiny cluster of unopened buds, set like yellow pearls in the green calix, tapered to a point so delicate that the faintest breath would set them waving and quivering as if mad to burst their bonds and flutter in the sunshine like the rest. And their perfume, that perfume of warm wax, the purest and sweetest in this world, filled the whole street — not altogether honestly perhaps, for, by a rare harmony of the eternal fitness of things, the long wall on

which they grew sheltered, in the middle of a beautiful garden, a wax factory where Church candles of every size were made, from the four-foot pillar, painted like a missal, that serves for the Paschal candle in Church, to the slim taper that the poorest could buy to light before the picture of their patron saint. It was worth while to be young, with every sense unspoiled, and to go dancing along that road on a summer afternoon; to stop where a low gateway led into the hidden garden and buy from the gardener's wife some of her fat bunches of red carnations and lavender, for the sake of the Blessed St. John, whose especial flowers they are — also the cones of lavender made by tying a bundle just below the flowers, then turning the stalks back over these and tying them again to form an egg-shaped casket from which nothing could escape, and within which the flowers themselves could crumble to fragrant dust that would keep your linen sweet for at least ten years from the day they were gathered. We never felt the summer had really come till the 24th of June, when the Feast of John the Baptist was kept in and around the Church of St. John the Evangelist. On the eve the Piazza was always the scene of a great fair, the only one held in Rome, during the whole year, except that of the "Befana" * in the heart of winter, on the eve of the Epiphany. Of course the "Eve of St. John" is the midsummer eve that was regarded with special and superstitious veneration not only by the pagans of Southern Europe, but by our own Teutonic and Scandinavian ancestors as well, from the times of the Druids themselves; for all it has been the festival of fire — because, I imagine, people wanted to scare away the dead who are supposed to leave their graves and

* See "A Diplomatist's Wife in Many Lands."

revisit their old haunts on that night, but still more, in the beginning of man-made worships, to render homage to the sun at the moment of his supreme triumph during those two or three days of midsummer. The bonfires were the great feature of the Roman fair; scores of them were lighted in the broad Piazza, and the boys and young men chased each other through them, trying to clear the flames at a leap and screaming out unintelligible old songs that probably served their ancestors for charms. The Feast of St. John is the first day on which it is considered safe to eat fresh figs, and the booths around the Piazza were piled up with baskets of these. We used to get the big purple ones, bursting with crimson syrup, some weeks earlier, but the Romans do not consider them as real figs. They are called "Fior di fico"; the pale green sort, with firm rose-coloured pulp and holding each its drop of amber gum on the tip, is the real fig, and it stays with us right through the summer. In Tuscany I used to climb into a fig tree (their smooth bark and fat low branches afford delightful seats) and stay there half the day, with a book, eating all I could desire of the ripe fruit and quite forgetting the feast when dinner time came. But when I was young the word "dyspepsia" had not crossed the Atlantic, and it had never dawned on any of us that any one could possibly be upset by such a trifle as mere food, whatever the kind or quantity indulged in! Once, I remember, our faithful "O Sté" of Rocca di Papa was terribly concerned because Marion, aged eight, whom he had conducted to the Fair at Grotia Ferrata, had eaten, as the old man thought, a little too voraciously. "The Signorino has frightened me," he said tremblingly to our governess as he restored the youngster to her in

the evening. "Twelve eggs and half a sucking pig he consumed for his dinner — I could not stop him — but I pray that he may come to no harm!"

That excursion must have been made for the Feast of Sant' Antonio, our Blessed Saint Anthony of Padua, for, as it falls on the 13th of June, it is the occasion of the sale of the first piglings of the season, and everybody makes it a point of honour to eat roast sucking pig on that day, unless he buys the little pinky white thing to fatten for the winter. This is why, in some of the representations of St. Anthony, there is a little pig lying at his feet. I saw a funny sight in Sorrento once on the day of his feast. There were baby pigs for sale everywhere, all along the deep lanes that intersect the Penisola, and a young seminarist, in ecclesiastical hat and soutane, had made up his mind to take one home as a present to his family. Anxiously he looked at and felt of a dozen or so before he made his choice; then came the bargaining for the price — half the fun to both buyer and seller. The boy was of the country and knew just what he ought to pay; the owner, seeing his costume, had taken him for a greenhorn and tried to impose upon him; the duel was long and vivacious. At last the matter was settled, the right sum paid, and then the seminarist undertook to carry his fairing home. But the pig refused to go, and a much more amusing duel than the first one took place before my eyes, the little pig slipping away from its would-be captor's hands and scuttling off in a cloud of dust down the lane, the seminarist in pursuit, his soutane flying, his three-cornered hat pushed back, his round young face crimson with excitement, while the man who had sold him the animal looked on in roars of laughter. Finally the pig was conquered, and the last I saw of him

was his wriggling hindquarters and curled-up tail protruding from the folds of the cassock in which the boy had rolled him up and tucked him under his arm, while he raced for home, triumphant, yet fearful that the obstinate little beast would get the best of him on the road.

One interest that generally came with the spring and early summer was that of making the round of the studios, where the artists let their friends look at the result of the year's work before leaving town on their vacation wanderings. Sometimes the studio and its surroundings were more attractive than the productions it contained and then it required some self-control to keep one's eye, under the jealous observation of the artist, on the canvases or the statues, instead of on the view from the windows or the beautiful draperies and curios which the wealthiest ones were even then beginning to collect around them. This has always seemed to me to be a mistake. The old idea was that the artist's workshop should contain nothing unconnected with his work or at any rate contributive to it. On entering the studio of a modern successful artist one has to pinch oneself to make sure one is not in a bric-à-brac establishment where spoils from all the curiosity shops in Europe have been tumbled together in view of a quick sale. There is none of the impressive space and concentration of purpose that one felt in the old ascetic studio with its hard north light, its aged painting table, its few seriously thought-out pictures, and its shoals of preparatory drawings and sketches. There were no "studio teas" in those days; the artist opened the door himself and told one frankly whether the visit were well-timed or not; if he were

prosperous his one familiar, some humble "Giuseppe" or "Antonio," came in at the end of the day to wash the brushes and perhaps sweep the floor; most of the time there were no chairs except one for the model and one for the painter. But the atmosphere of work was there, and the respect for it struck every one who crossed the threshold, so that voices were lowered and even the most enthusiastic admiration very soberly expressed.

I always felt like an ignorant intruder when I had penetrated into one of these sanctuaries, but there were some from which I could not keep away. One belonged to Hébert, the then president of the French Academy in Rome. He was a grave, dark-eyed man with a low voice and much indulgence for youth and ignorance, and he never asked one for comments or ideas — just let one stand before his glowing paintings and dream — as his Madonnas seemed to dream — in silent happiness. Not that his superb Armenian beauties were really Madonnas at all; their loveliness was mysterious but not spiritual; the unfathomable eyes had seen all the glory and the tragedy of earth, but they had never looked on Heaven; the glowing cheeks had never paled with awe, the exquisite idle hands could never have been folded in prayer. It was perfect beauty, but beauty unbaptised, a type which might have served for a Cleopatra, could Cleopatra have lived without sin, but never for Mary of Nazareth.

One year, I remember, Hébert had devoted all his time to one great allegorical canvas, the Shunamite of the Canticle seeking news of her Beloved from the maidens by the gate. The faint eastern dawn was paling the sky and bringing out mistily a few features of the city in the background, as a train of girls who had been to fetch water were returning from the well. They were human

girls, and had been chattering gaily as they approached the gate; then the words died on their lips, the foremost ones fell back, crowding those behind, for they were met by the Shunamite, a maid in all the white beauty of first youth, undraped, naked as truth, and pure as Eve on the morning of her creation, her eyes shining with love through brimming tears, and her hands stretched out entreatingly as she asked, " Have ye seen my Beloved, ye daughters of Jerusalem? "

It was a strange picture; the thought was the same that Titian expressed in his " Divine and Earthly Love," which is, to me, the most beautiful of his paintings. Hébert had got away from his own gorgeous traditions altogether and had painted with true inspiration. The girl's body was like a slender reed of flame, just hovering on earth before rising to Heaven.

There was every year an exhibition, at the French Academy, of the work of the students, who, having won the " Prix de Rome " in Paris, were privileged to study in Rome for three years at the expense of the French Government. Unfortunately for the attractiveness of the exhibition, it was incumbent on the students to introduce one or more nude figures into their paintings to show what progress they were making in anatomical drawing. The more zealous ones would sometimes cover a fifteen-foot canvas with a crowd of nude warriors in every stress of effort that the most violent conflict could call forth, the copious bloodshed depicted demonstrating, to a thoughtful mind, the young painter's feelings towards the strict and exigent judges who were to pronounce upon his merits. I remember a " Rape of the Sabines," where some rather dandified Roman robbers were taking no end of trouble to possess themselves of a mob of huge, beefy

viragos who were kicking and struggling with all their might — creatures whom no practical man would attempt for a moment to bring into his home.

But, once free from the drill of training, the French painters of those days gave us some very charming and poetical productions. One of my favourite artists was Hamon, a man whose fancies were usually as delicate and elusive as thistledown floating on a moonbeam. He saw everything through dawnlight or twilight; his nymphs and loves, hovering over flowers, painting the morning-glories, sowing white stars for lilies and golden ones for honeysuckles, were too ethereal to be quite human, too alluring to be all spiritual — but exquisite beyond words. Yet he too painted one serious picture which, once seen, could never be forgotten. It was called "Le triste Rivage." In the foreground rolled the inky Styx, with Charon, sitting, dark and saturninely indifferent, in his skiff, oars shipped ready to put out as soon as the craft should be full. And to it, down a narrow canyon between high granite walls, pressed a stream of humanity, old men and youths, kings and pontiffs and beggars, mothers with their babies in their arms, young beauties in all the pomp of silk and pearls, sages with calm sapient eyes, and naked criminals dragging their chains, not one conscious of any presence but his own — the awful loneliness of death stamped on every face — yet all crowding and pushing forward to the narrow beach and the waiting boat — every eye strained to catch some glimpse of the land that lay, shrouded in darkness, on the other side. It made one think.

Talking of pictures, I must speak of one that my sister and I saw in Munich or Dresden, in 1867, I think, a year which was considered remarkably rich in good modern

exhibitions abroad — where, by the way, the average was immeasurably higher than I ever found it at the Academy shows in London. This that we fell in love with was a painting of a Sphinx — a great white marble creature with globed breasts and a face of bestial beauty, cold as ice. She crouched on her high pedestal in a tangle of white roses flooded with moonlight. A young man, little more than a boy, was falling back from her, his ashy face, sublime in death, still transfigured with the mortal ecstasy of her kiss; and her pitiless marble talons were yet clutching his body. I wish I could remember the name of the painter. He must have been a true poet.

CHAPTER IX

ST. CECILIA

Persecution Result of Covetousness—Steady Growth of Christianity—Story of Saint Cecilia—Dress of a Patrician Woman—A Roman Marriage—Cecilia's Consecration—Apparition of St. Paul—Cecilia's Guardian Angel—Conversion of Two Roman Nobles—Slaughter of Christians—A Declaration of Faith—Condemnation of the Nobles.

TIME passes on; madmen and sages, dolts and fighters succeed one another on the Imperial Throne, and try to hold together such rags of the Purple as are left to them; one and all agree in looking upon Christianity as a pestilential fad, to be stamped out by any means that come to hand. Some institute official persecutions, some merely leave the governors of cities and provinces to deal with the pest according to their own ideas. Even the most careless or the most indulgent never revoke the ancient edicts of proscription, and these edicts are always there in reserve to strengthen the hand of any man in authority, who, for his own ends, desires to destroy and confiscate. For it must be remembered that in the Roman Empire, from the First to the Fourth Century, even as in England under Henry and Elizabeth and their successors, persecution was mostly the result of covetousness, and that the insane law adjudging the property of the condemned to those who procured their conviction was the same in both cases and constituted an appeal to selfish passions far too strong to go unused.

The more energetic or less vicious of the Emperors spent but little time in Rome itself after the middle of

the Second Century; the safety of the Empire, surrounded by a fringe of enemies and barbarians, constantly required their presence elsewhere, and so the supreme municipal power fell almost completely into the hands of the governors, men who had rarely reached that prominence honestly and who made haste to reap their private harvest as rapidly as possible. Such an one was a certain Turcius Almachius who became the Prefect of the city under Alexander Severus in the early part of the Third Century. Alexander is generally described as a fair-minded and indulgent man, who, though he permitted the edicts of proscription to remain on the statute books, had no personal hostility to the Christians and did not consider that their existence constituted a menace to the State. Perhaps he thought enough had been done already to annihilate their claims, and believed that the "superstition," as it was called, would die a natural death. And, all the time, Christianity was growing to be a great force, nullifying the sentence of death pronounced upon it, by the solid irresistible pressure of its own vitality, even as the tender shoot sprung from an acorn will at last rend and shatter the heavy tombstone beneath which it lay.

This steady yet gentle growth of Christianity during the hundred and eighty years which had passed between the date of St. Peter's coming to Rome and that of the accession of Alexander Severus, is vividly illustrated in the fact that various wealthy pagan parents of the latter epoch did nothing to oppose the Christian education of their children when accident or the designs of Providence rendered such education possible. One cannot help thinking that even they realised that Christianity taught the boys and girls to be very virtuous and obedient children, from whom they would always receive the highest meas-

ure of filial love and duty. So it was that the only daughter of the noble Cecilius, one of the few representatives left of the true aristocracy of better times, was brought up from her infancy in the Christian faith. We are not told who her teacher was — perhaps some poor slave, who thus conferred on her master's family an honour before which all those of noble ancestry and vast possessions were destined to pale, the honour of giving one of her most illustrious martyrs to the Church.

The maiden Cecilia was so beautiful, so good, so accomplished, and withal such a loving, docile daughter, that it must have been with a great pang at heart that her father and mother saw the hour approach in which she must leave them for the house of the husband they had chosen for her, the young Valerianus, a fit mate in every way for their dear child, in her parents' eyes. But to Cecilia their decision brought great fear and perplexity. Valerianus was all that they believed him to be — noble, upright, kind-hearted, a distinguished officer, with a heart as clean as his countenance was beautiful — but Cecilia had long ago vowed her life to God; the Pontiff, St. Urban, had approved of her high choice, and she had been assured by her Guardian Angel — constantly visible to her pure eyes in daily life — that God had accepted the sacrifice and would never permit her love for Him to be shared with an earthly spouse. Yet we, who know less of God's ways than did the holy girl, read with something like astonishment that Cecilia ventured upon no open opposition to her parents' plans for her. The authority of a Roman father was so supreme that it would have appeared to her an impiety to resist it. That she was consumed with anxiety and fear, we know, and that she spent nights and days in prayer to

God, to His Angels, and to the Blessed Apostles, to protect her from the threatened danger. No "Acts of the Martyrs" are more full and authentic than those of St. Cecilia, written by those who had known her in life and who witnessed her death. As the dreaded day approached, she redoubled in fervour, and, fearing her own weakness in presence of the young man whom his high spirit, virtue, and beauty made her love as a brother, she fought down all carnal impulses by prayer and fasting (sometimes for three days together) and mortified her flesh by wearing a hair shirt under her rich dress.

At last the wedding day dawned, and the great palace was all humming with joyous excitement. Her mother came into Cecilia's room to dress her for her marriage. Her beautiful hair was braided in six long strands, in imitation of that of the Vestal Virgins; her family had always clung to the high ideals of ancient Rome, and no taint from the deluge of luxury and vice in which the Empire was plunged had ever penetrated into their sternly guarded homes. In daily life we are told that Cecilia went clothed, like other patrician ladies, in garments richly embroidered with gold, but on this, the day of her wedding, her mother put upon her a robe of plain home-spun wool spotlessly white, copied from the one woven by her ancestress, Caia Cecilia, hundreds of years before, and which was the original tunic, the model upon which woman's costume was founded for something like a thousand years afterwards. Good Roman women still looked upon the wise and simple Tanaquil as their pattern in all the matters of domestic life, and at the period of which we are speaking the Etrurian Queen's spindle and distaff were still preserved among the sacred insignia of the city. A white woollen girdle,

like Queen Tanaquil's, was bound round Cecilia's waist, and then she was shrouded in the flame-coloured veil with which every Roman girl, noble or simple, covered her face and head when she went to meet her bridegroom. The veil not only signified maiden modesty, but denoted the firm constancy with which the bride was prepared to cling to her husband. It was originally the badge of the women of the Flaminia, a race which, some four hundred years before St. Cecilia's day, held the Catholic belief as to the inviolability of marriage, and prohibited divorce. The "Flammeum," as the flame-coloured veil was called, remained, for this reason, in use at Christian weddings, until, at any rate, the Fourth Century, when St. Ambrose spoke of it in his treatise on "Virginity."

But Cecilia's marriage was a purely pagan ceremony, the first at which she had ever been obliged to assist. Wine and milk were offered to the gods, and she raised her heart to the one true God, renewing the offer of her whole being to Him; the cake, "the symbol of alliance," was broken and shared, her hand was placed in the hand of her ardent bridegroom, and they were now man and wife. As the sun sank behind the Janiculum Hill, the bride was conducted, with great pomp and rejoicing, to the dwelling of her husband, across the Tiber, now the Church of St. Cecilia in Trastevere that we all know so well.

All the way, through the songs and music, Cecilia prayed in her heart that she might be protected, and be helped to keep her vow; brighter than the numberless torches carried in the procession shone her faith in God, who has never forsaken His own when they called upon Him. Valerianus was waiting for her in the stately pil-

lared portico, all decorated with rich white tapestry and strewn with flowers. Here the second plighting of their bond took place, after the ancient Roman custom.

"Who art thou?" asked the bridegroom, as the bride first stepped on the portico.

"Where thou art Caius, I will be Caia," Cecilia replied, in the invariable formula, which, in her case, was a double assurance, since she was directly descended from the noble Caia Cecilia, the type and standard for all good wives. To her was then presented, first, clear water, the emblem of purity, and then a key, symbolic of the care she must have of the household and its goods. After that she sate down for a moment on a fleece intended to remind her that she must work with her hands; and, these ceremonies over, the family and the guests accompanied the newly married ones into the dining-hall and the wedding banquet went merrily forward to the sound of music. Music was Cecilia's own language, but she had always used her sweet voice to sing the praises of the one true God. Now she "sang to Him what was in her heart" and ceased not to pray. When all was over and the guests withdrew, the chosen band of matrons led Cecilia to the door of the sumptuous chamber, perfumed, full of flowers, dimly lighted, where her splendid passionate lover would come to make her his own.

Who cannot feel the awe and thrill of that moment, the choking of heart with which the maiden listened for Valerianus' footsteps, the fear and the hope, the sublime trust in God, yet the full realisation of the struggle to come?

Valerianus entered, and came towards his bride, and Cecilia with great gentleness said: "Oh, most sweet and most beloved youth, there is a secret which I must confide

to thee if now thou wilt swear sacredly to respect it." Valerianus promised, very solemnly, that he would forever hold secret what she was about to tell him, and Cecilia continued: "I am under the care of an Angel whom God has appointed protector of my virginity. If thou shouldst violate it, his fury will be enkindled against thee, and thou wilt fall a victim to his vengeance. If, on the other hand, thou wilt respect it, he will bestow on thee his love and obtain for thee many blessings."

Valerianus was greatly astonished and agitated, but Divine Grace was already working in his heart, and he replied: "Cecilia, if thou desirest that I should believe thee, let me see this Angel. Then, if I recognise him as truly an Angel of God, I will do as thou hast asked me. But, if I find thou lovest another man, both him and thee I will slay with my own sword."

With calm and heavenly authority, Cecilia replied: "If thou wilt follow my counsel, Valerianus, if thou wilt consent to be purified in the fountain of eternal life, if thou wilt believe in the one true and living God, thou shalt behold my Guardian Angel."

Eagerly Valerianus cried, "And who will purify me, that I may see him?"

"There is a holy old man who thus purifies mortals," she said.

"And where shall I find him?" Valerianus asked.

In Cecilia's reply to this question we have a wonderfully vivid picture of Christian life in Rome at that time:

"Thou must go out of the city by the Appian Way as far as the third milestone. There thou wilt find some poor beggars who will ask an alms of thee. I have always taken care of them, and they well know my secret. Give

them my blessing and say: ' Cecilia sends me to you that you may conduct me to the holy old man, for I have a secret message which I must bring to him.' And thou, Valerianus, when thou art in the presence of Urban, relate to him all my words, and he will purify thee and clothe thee in new white garments, and then, when thou returnest to this chamber, thou shalt see the holy Angel, who will evermore be thy friend and obtain for thee all that thou shalt ask of him."

Valerianus believed. The innocent, yet earthly love, which a few moments earlier had fired his heart, was transfigured into a heavenly flame which aspired to God. Without an instant's delay he set out, alone, on foot, and in the dead of night — his wedding night — to traverse the whole city and miles of the solitary road beyond, to find the dispenser of Grace. All was as Cecilia had told him; the beggars gladly obeyed her commands and led him to the refuge where Urban prayed and whence he governed the Church. And what a revelation it must have been to the brilliant young officer to discover, concealed beneath the ground over which he must often have led his company of cavalry in all their pomp of golden helmets and shining armour, the subterranean city of the Christian Faith!

Throwing himself at Urban's feet, Valerianus poured out his story, and the venerable Servant of God was so overcome with joy that he fell on his knees, and, while tears of gratitude coursed down his cheeks, thus gave thanks for the noble young soul called to great salvation;

" Lord Jesus Christ, sower of chaste counsels, receive the fruit of that which Thou didst sow in Cecilia! Lord Jesus Christ, good Shepherd, Cecilia Thy handmaid hath served Thee like a faithful * lamb. The spouse who was

* " Argumentosa " — that which is proven.

like an untamed lion, she has made into a most gentle lamb, for he who is here, did he not believe, would not have come. Therefore, Lord, open the gate of his heart to Thy Words, that he may know Thee for his Creator, and that he may renounce the Devil with his pomps and idols."

Urban remained long in prayer; Valerianus was deeply touched. Suddenly a venerable old man, with garments white as snow, appeared before them, holding in his hand a book written in characters of gold. It was the great Apostle St. Paul. Valerianus, half dead with terror, fell prostrate on the ground. The Apostle gently raised him up, saying: "Read this book and believe. Thou wilt then be worthy of being purified, and of beholding the Angel whom Cecilia promised that thou shouldst see."

The young man raised his eyes to the book and read, in the golden letters, these words — as we of to-day read them when we raise our eyes under the dome of St. Peter's: "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is above all, through all, and in us all!"

The Apostle asked him, "Believest thou this, or dost thou yet doubt?"

And Valerianus, with his heart in the cry, exclaimed, "There is nothing else more truly to be believed under Heaven!"

Then he found himself alone with Urban; the holy apparition had vanished. Urban led him to the baptismal Font, washed his soul from every stain of sin, gave him the Food of Angels, called down the Holy Ghost upon him to clothe him in strength and virtue, put over his rich robes the white garment of the Neophyte, and bade him return to his bride.

The night had passed, and the sun had risen upon the city as he made his way back through the streets where so many were dressed in white in those days that his mystical garment attracted no unusual attention. All was quiet in the great palace across the river. The slaves were moving silently about their work so as not to disturb the slumbers of their master and mistress in the remote chamber whence no sound had yet issued, and if some looked up in surprise as Valerianus passed in, none would dare to question him as to his early walk. Swiftly he went on, and parted the hangings of the entrance to the chamber where Cecilia had knelt motionless in prayer through the long night. There he paused in awe and joy, for, standing close to her was the Angel of the Lord, his wings effulgent plumes, his countenance a flame of radiance, while in his hands he held two crowns, flashing with roses and snowy with lilies.

These he gently placed on the bowed young heads, saying, in tones of such music as Valerianus had never heard before: "Guard these crowns by purity of heart and sanctity of body, for I have brought them to you from the Paradise of God; and this shall be a sign to you — never shall their beauty fade nor their sweet fragrance diminish, nor shall they be visible to others save such as have pleased God by their purity as you have pleased Him. And since thou, Valerianus, didst consent to the course of chastity, Christ the Son of God hath sent me to thee, that thou shouldst ask for whatever thou most desirest."

Valerianus threw himself at the Angel's feet, and thus besought him: "Nothing in this life is sweeter to me than the love of my only brother, and it is terrible to me that I, being liberated, must see my brother still in

danger of perdition. This one prayer will I set before every other petition, and beseech God that He will deign to deliver my brother Tiburtius as He has delivered me, and that He will make us both perfect in the confession of His Name."

At Valerianus' request, the Angel's face was transfigured with rapture. "Since thou hast asked this," he replied, "which Christ desires to grant more than thou to receive, even as by His servant Cecilia thou wast won to Him, so by thee shall thy brother be won, and both shall obtain the Martyr's palm."

Then the Angel left them and returned to Heaven, and Cecilia and Valerianus remained together, their hearts almost breaking with joy. For long hours they talked of heavenly things, and then, towards the afternoon, their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Tiburtius, the gay, loving younger brother, who declared that he had stayed away long enough and *must* see his dear Valerianus! Advancing towards his new sister, he bent down and lightly kissed her hair, and then exclaimed, in delight at the exquisite fragrance emanating from it: "Cecilia, I am full of wonder to know whence, at this season of the year, comes this perfume of roses and lilies? For, even if I held real roses and real lilies in my hands, they could not diffuse such sweet odours on my senses. I declare to you that I feel as refreshed as if I had just received new being!"

It was Valerianus who answered: "The enjoyment of this fragrance, which has been granted to thee at my prayer, Tiburtius, shall, if thou wilt now believe, be surpassed by the joy of seeing these heavenly flowers and of knowing Him Whose Blood flows red as the

rose, Whose Flesh is white as lilies. We two wear crowns, invisible to thee now, woven of flowers dazzling as purple, purer than snow."

At these words the first faint dawn of things spiritual broke on the mind of Tiburtius, but there was a struggle before it could pierce the veil of contented materialism that had enveloped him all his life. "Art thou dreaming, Valerianus?" he cried, "or is it possible that these things are truth?"

"We have dreamed all our lives, brother," was the reply. "Now we have awaked, to see the truth."

The colloquy goes on; Valerianus, with all the ardour of his recent illumination upon him, trying to impart to his brother that which he learned but a few hours earlier. Cecilia has kept silence before the quick flow of question and answer, but at a given moment she intervenes, and, with the calm majesty that so singularly invests all her words and actions, says: "It is to me, dear Tiburtius, that you should put these questions. Valerianus is new in the Faith — I have known all its doctrines from my childhood." And then comes that magnificent unfolding of the truths of Christianity which sounds more like the authoritative teaching of one of the Fathers of the Church than the profession of faith of a young girl. No point seems left in doubt; it is a luminous paraphrase of the Creed, adapted, with sublime tact and wisdom, to the requirements of the youth nurtured in merely pagan piety, surrounded with everything that could make this life attractive, and utterly unconscious of the immortality that was in him.

That breaks on him as a new light, undreamt of before, but he does not yield at once like Valerianus. He cries out in revolt when told that in order to be purified

he must take the same road, cast himself at the feet of a poor proscribed old man hiding underground among the tombs of despised victims. "But there is a price set on that old man's head," he urges, "and, if we are known to hold any intercourse with him, we shall be tortured and killed, and shall lose our lives here for a hope which may be vain, after all!"

Cecilia had convinced him of the folly of worshipping idols made, as she said, "of stone and metal dug and fashioned by criminals"; but life, life as he knew it, was too sweet and real to be risked for anything less than the certainty of a better one. "Is it possible," he breaks out, "that there can be another life after this one? Never have I heard of such a doctrine!"

Few in Rome had. The very Barbarians held some misty hope of future reward, some half-formed fear of future punishment; but the masters of the world then, like so many of its masters now, had sunk so deep in materialism that atheism was the only doctrine suited to their voluntary blindness, and even gallant, honest young men like Tiburtius and his brother had not a suspicion that any other could exist. Yet, because they were honest, and their hearts were pure, they did not turn their eyes away when the light was shown them. Cecilia went on to explain the truths of our Redemption, her discourse evidently intended not only to enlighten Tiburtius, but to amplify and perfect for Valerianus the instruction received from Urban during the preceding night. At last Tiburtius, all his doubts set at rest, threw himself, with many tears, at her feet, crying: "If ever again I consider this present life worth a thought or a wish, let me never obtain life eternal! Let fools hold to the insensate pleasures that pass away — I, who have lived

until to-day without an object, will never henceforth live without one." Then, appealing to Valerianus, he implored: "Have mercy on me, dearest brother, for I can bear no waiting. I fear delay. I cannot carry this weight! I beseech thee, take me to the man of God, that, purifying me, he may make me a partaker of the other life!"

Gladly Valerianus led him to Urban, who received him tenderly, baptised him the next day, and kept him at his side for seven days following, during which the generous boy's ardour was inflamed by beholding the crowded tombs of the martyrs, all marked by palm branches in sign of victory. He returned to the palace by the Tiber, a giant in strength, only desiring the hour when he should be called upon to confess Christ before men. And then began that beautiful life of the three Saints, which lasted indeed but a few months, but which must have been like a foretaste of Heaven, a life all full of love of God and charity to man. Cecilia gave much time and most of her wealth to the poor Christians, among whom were great numbers of widows and orphans deprived of their bread-winner by the ferocity of Almachius, who boasted, if I remember rightly, that during his Prætorship he had caused the death of more than five thousand Christians of the poorer sort. The chief characteristics of Turcius Almachius were rapacity and cruelty. While Alexander Severus was actually in Rome, the Emperor's presence, and his known dislike of bloodshed in times of peace, acted as a salutary curb on the inclinations of the Prefect of the city; but in the year 230 Alexander was absent for a long time, apparently in Persia, since some medāls commemorating his victories there were struck with this date. The civil

power reposed entirely in the hands of Almachius, and he made haste to use it to satisfy his virulent hatred of the Christians. In this he found powerful allies among the people, whose feelings against the new religion had been fomented by a thousand calumnies, amusingly like those which the enemies of the Church pay such large sums to have circulated now. No sooner had the Emperor departed than the storm of the Prefect's fury broke out; the Christians, chiefly poor people with no one to defend them, were apprehended, tortured, and killed in enormous numbers. The places of execution ran day after day with their blood. But the rage of their official persecutor was not satisfied with inflicting merely suffering and death. Knowing the great reverence with which the followers of Christ regarded the bodies of the martyrs, he issued an edict forbidding their burial. They were to lie where they fell, and whosoever should attempt to give them sepulture was to be condemned to share their fate.

So frightful was the slaughter at this time that the old underground cemeteries were all choked with dead; but St. Calixtus, the predecessor of Urban, had foreseen, or had perceived by prophetic revelation, the coming necessity, and had prepared a vast new catacomb adjoining the older ones along the Appian Way. It had not long to wait for its glorious occupants. The Christians regarded the burial of the martyrs as a most solemn duty, from which no danger to themselves was ever allowed to deter them. Those who had money frequently paid great sums to obtain the mangled remains, which they lovingly gathered together, wrapped in spices and perfumes, and carried, at the risk of their lives, into the sacred vaults of the Catacombs. Great numbers paid

for their devotion with their blood, but others always came forward to take their places.

What was the surprise of the poor hunted Christians to behold, in that spring of 230, two of the noblest and most brilliant young officers in Rome present themselves day after day to assist in this perilous duty! With all the courage of their rank and profession, Valerianus and Tiburtius devoted themselves to saving the holy bodies from profanation and spent their wealth lavishly in bestowing on them funeral honours. Cecilia had long done all she could to assist in the pious work, but the restrictions placed on noble ladies had so far saved her from attracting the baneful notice of the Prefect. It was otherwise with Valerianus and his brother. They were well known and could not pass unperceived. Almachius was furious when he heard of their actions. He was ready enough to persecute the poor; should the Emperor on his return enquire into the sacrifice of so many thousands of his subjects, the old excuse could be given — either they had raised a sedition, or else the people had turned against them and the authorities had not been able to control the popular fury. But when it came to wealthy young officers of the Guard, everywhere respected and admired, a very different sort of enquiry would be instituted, and the Prefect would probably be severely reprimanded, if not actually punished, for having laid hands upon them.

Yet, for his own sake, he must see that his orders were respected. Doubtless these fashionable youths had been led away by foolish enthusiasm and would see reason when the all-powerful Governor laid it before them. He would send for them and give them a good lecture;

they would express their regret at having offended him, and then he would let them go.

Little he knew the spirit of those gallant boys! When they stood before him, he sought to appeal to their pride by asking them if it were really true that they, men of patrician standing, were not only squandering their fortune on low-born wretches, but were actually giving their dead bodies honourable burial! Was it possible that nobles had become the accomplices of criminals!

Tiburtius, the younger and more impulsive of the brothers, answered him. "Would to God," he cried, "that those whom you call our accomplices would permit us to become their servants! They have obtained the only reality. May we imitate their holiness and one day follow in their footsteps!"

This was not what Almachius had expected, and he tried to soothe and flatter the young man's feelings by turning the conversation into other channels, particularly by complimenting him on his remarkable resemblance to his brother; but Tiburtius was not to be lured aside. A strange dialogue on the philosophy of Christianity ensued, and then the Governor, declaring that Tiburtius had lost his reason, smilingly dismissed him and addressed himself, with no better fortune, to Valerianus. His great object now was to prevent the young men from making a public profession of their Christianity; one sees how the crafty middle-aged man feared equally the risk of bringing them to punishment and that of having his supremacy openly flouted before the people. But all his cowardly efforts were in vain. Valerianus, in presence of the multitudes that curiosity or sympathy had now gathered around him, boldly declared that there was but one true God, and that those who worshipped idols

made by men were destined to eternal punishment. Then, the impossible happened to silence him. Almachius commanded that he, the free-born Roman noble, should be publicly scourged. The sentence was executed on the spot, Tiburtius mourning that he did not share it — his brother had preceded him in suffering for Christ!

The greatest excitement prevailed. The sound of the lead-laden scourge tearing the martyr's flesh filled the air; a herald shouted, for the benefit of the onlookers, "Beware of blaspheming the gods and goddesses!" With a great effort, Valerianus made his voice heard above the tumult. "Citizens of Rome," he cried, "be not discouraged by the sight of my torments from confessing the truth! Be firm in your faith and believe in the one true, holy God! Destroy the false gods to whom Almachius sacrifices, crush and annihilate them, for all who adore them will be tormented everlastingly."

In spite of the constancy of the brothers, Almachius, frightened at the possible consequences of his acts, was at this point inclined to let them go; but the Devil, in the shape of one Tarquinius, his assessor of taxes, managed to whisper in his ear: "If you do not condemn them now, they will give all their wealth to the poor, and there will be nothing left for you — to confiscate."

Instantly Avarice sprang to her throne in the ever docile soul of Almachius. With much pomp and severity he pronounced sentence on the "criminals." They were to be led out to the Pagus Triopius, to the Temple of Jupiter, by the fourth milestone of the Appian Way, and there commanded to offer incense to the idol. If they refused, they were to be beheaded and their bodies left where they should fall.

CHAPTER X

MARTYRDOM OF ST. CECILIA

A Glorious Martyrdom—A Vision of Heaven—The Bodies of the Martyrs—Prefect Incensed Against St. Cecilia—Preparation for Death—Her Trial—Her Victory and Martyrdom—The Miracle of Her Three Days' Ministering—Final Honours—Martyrdom of St. Urban and His Companions—Cecilia's Place Among Martyrs—Her Tomb in the Catacombs—Pope Paschal's Vision of St. Cecilia—Cecilia's Restoration to Her Own Church—History of Her Church—The Second Finding of Her Body—Her Statue.

AND Cecilia? While the first chapter of the glorious tragedy was being enacted before the tribunal of Almachius, she had been immersed in fervent prayer for those she loved, asking not that their lives should be spared, but that their faith should be strengthened and that they might come triumphantly through their ordeal. Valerianus, through some Christian friend, immediately informed her of all that was taking place. Still she waited and prayed. The officer charged with carrying out the commands of Almachius was his notary, Maximus, a man of upright life and kind heart. As he led the brothers away he mourned openly over the terrible doom which they had drawn down upon themselves, and entreated them to reconsider their resolutions and save their lives, pointing out that they were throwing away all their splendid advantages of youth, wealth, and a brilliant future, for a miserable delusion. Valerianus, filled with the Spirit of God, explained to him the Christian doctrine of a future life, which so amazed the honest man that he swore, by all he held sacred, that if he

could believe in eternal happiness he would sacrifice everything on earth to attain it.

"Only repent of your sins," Valerianus replied, "and I promise you that at the moment of our death, the Heavens shall be opened to you, and you shall behold with your own eyes the glory of the Blessed."

"I accept," Maximus answered. "May the thunderbolts of Heaven consume me if, after you have shown me what you promise, I do not confess the One God who has prepared another life to follow this one!"

Now Valerianus was filled with a great desire to see Maximus baptised before his own death, so he asked him to delay the execution of the sentence for a few hours and to conduct his prisoners to his own house, where, as he explained, the soldiers could still keep guard over them, so that no lapse from duty could be laid to the notary's charge. Maximus gladly consented, and led the brothers and their guards to his dwelling — we are not told where it stood — and there Cecilia hastened to rejoin them. No word is recorded of her anguish at seeing her beloved Valerianus all torn and bleeding from the lashes of the whips. Surely she kissed and washed the pitiful wounds so joyously received for Christ's sake; but this was a time for quick and courageous action, and the one thought in her mind as in that of her husband and his brother was to save as many souls as possible in this supreme hour. She hastened to summon several priests, and, under cover of nightfall, brought them to the house of Maximus, where, by this time, many persons were assembled. The notary, his entire family, and the soldiers under his command listened eagerly to the instructions of the priests, and, before the first gleam of dawn tinged the sky, were all

baptised. A great chorus of thanksgiving went up to God. Not one had been left out, not a voice but joined in that pæan.

Then, the sun rose and a great silence fell — "Facto magno silentio," Cecilia spake, not in words of her own choosing — she repeated that splendid battle cry of St. Paul: "Arise, soldiers of Christ! Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. You have fought a good fight, you have finished your course, you have kept the Faith. Go to receive the Crown of Life which the Just Judge gives to you, and not to you only, but to all who love His coming!"

She, who had opened to her dear ones the gates of life, now bade them forth to death. No word she spoke of her own grief, of the desolation that awaited her till her own hour (not far away, as she knew) should come. We are not told whether she accompanied the martyrs to the place of execution. With all her glorious valour she was but a young and loving woman, and God may have chosen to spare her the last dreadful sight, may have led her back to her empty home to pray, rather than out to the public road to shudder and weep.

Maximus and his soldiers, praying also, led Valerianus and Tiburtius over the well-known road as far as the temple in the Pagus Triopius, where the waiting priests of Jupiter commanded them to offer incense before the idol. For answer, the young men knelt down and offered their necks to the executioner's sword. Those who had been charged with the cruel mission confessed loudly that they were Christians now, and refused to perform it, but others were present who offered themselves as substitutes. A moment later the two young heads rolled on the ground, and Maximus, as Valerianus had prom-

ised him, saw the souls of the martyrs carried to Heaven, which was opened before his eyes, on the wings of Angels resplendent as suns. He could not contain the ecstasy with which the sight had filled him, and was now himself consumed with the love of God and the desire to attain to the same glory. Many of the pagans who had gathered around were converted on the spot, and Almachius, incensed beyond measure, caused Maximus to be scourged to death a few days afterwards.

The Christians obtained possession of the bodies of Valerianus and Tiburtius, and Cecilia, weeping and rejoicing, received the dear remains, wrapped them in costly silks with great wealth of precious balms, and buried them in the cemetery of Pretextatus near the second milestone of the Appian Way. She sealed their tomb with the emblems of victory, the palm and crown, and returned to the palace beyond the Tiber to await the will of God in regard to herself. When she heard of the martyrdom of Maximus she came forth to take up his body, which she buried with her own hands near those of her husband and his brother, and on his tomb she caused to be engraved the symbol of resurrection, the phœnix rising from its own ashes.

Her next care was to forestall the rapacity of Almachius by distributing all the goods of Valerianus to the poor, a measure which so inflamed the Prefect's fury that he began to cast about for some means of doing away with her, without arousing the ire of the people; a difficult matter, since all in Rome, both pagans and Christians, knew and admired her for her noble birth, her great beauty, and her many virtues, more especially for her all-embracing charity. The murder of Valerianus and Tiburtius had not pleased the populace; that of

Cecilia might easily cause a riot; it behooved Almachius to proceed with caution. As in the former case, he felt that her Christianity, so openly professed in the face of his thundered prohibitions, was a direct affront to his authority and that she must be forced to retract; yet he feared the resentment of the Emperor, and also of the people, should he venture upon bringing her to a public trial. So he hit upon an expedient which, he thought, would satisfy all parties. He sent some officers to see her, and to tell her that, if she would sacrifice to the gods in their presence, in the privacy of her home, the Governor would be satisfied and would molest her no further.

The officers very unwillingly accepted the task laid upon them, and, when they found themselves face to face with Cecilia, were so overcome by the sight of her calm and heavenly beauty that they could scarcely explain their mission. Cecilia spoke to them with great gentleness. She told them that she knew how their hearts revolted from carrying out the impious designs of their superior. She said that she sorrowed not at all for herself, since she was only too happy to suffer for Christ, but that she deeply pitied them, who "in the flower of their youth were condemned to obey the orders of an unjust judge."

The young men were cut to the heart to see this exquisite girl *(tam elegans puella),* so noble and so wise, inviting martyrdom, and they besought her with tears not to "fling so much beauty to Death!" But in her calm, lucid way she explained that to die for Christ was to renew youth forever; that to exchange mortality for immortality was like giving up a little handful of lead to receive inexhaustible treasures of purest gold. She saw

that the scales were falling from their eyes, and, all aflame to gain more souls to Christ, she cried, " Do you believe what I have told you? " And they replied: " We believe Christ the Son of God to be truly God, Who possesses such a servant! "

Cecilia had won another victory. " Go now," she commanded, " to unhappy Almachius, and tell him that I pray him not to hasten my passion, and then return here to my house and you shall find him who will make you sharers of Eternal Life."

The few days' delay was granted, and the officers returned joyfully to Cecilia's house. She had at once sent to inform St. Urban of her approaching martyrdom, and begged him to come at once, as many whom she had instructed and converted were desirous of receiving baptism before her death. The Pope hastened to her side and remained with her for all that was left of her life. The house became a temple of prayer and praise; more than four hundred persons, the officers of Almachius foremost among them, were baptised. In order to prevent the confiscation of her property, Cecilia made her will devising her house and all it contained to a certain Gordian, " one of her converts, a most upright man," charging him to make of the dwelling where the Sacrament of Baptism had been conferred a " Church of the Lord forever."

Then, when all was accomplished and her work on earth completed, Almachius sent for her to appear before him and answer the accusations brought against her. Joyfully she obeyed. The account of her trial is very remarkable, evidently taken down on the spot by some one who witnessed it, and as evidently genuine not only because of the endorsement of contemporaries, but be-

cause of some curious allusions to customs prevailing at that particular time.

Too long and diffuse to transcribe here, the proceedings opened with the usual question, a question regarded evidently as something of a farce by the onlookers, since all Rome knew of Cecilia, and the greatest excitement prevailed in the crowd that had assembled to see the noble, delicately nurtured lady brought to trial like a common criminal.

Cecilia's very small stature and delicate frame surprised the Prefect, who had never seen her before, and his question seems to show that he had forgotten that she was a married woman.

"Who art thou, child?" he asked.

"I am called Cecilia among men," she replied, "but I have a more illustrious name — that of 'Christian.'"

"What is thy rank?"

"A Roman citizen of illustrious and noble family."

"We know that. I asked thee of thy religion."

"Thy interrogation was a strangely incorrect one, since to one question it required two answers."

Cecilia's logic was incontrovertible and the Prefect lost his temper at once. He reproached her with what he called her insolence, boasted of his authority, tried to frighten her with threats, was drawn into arguments as to the existence of the pagan gods and their power to punish those who should resist them; as to the "invincibility of the Emperors," and other points, on every one of which the highly educated, intellectual girl, calm as an Angel, and relying on God to sustain her, confounded him publicly, to the great delight, and as she intended, to the edification and instruction of her hearers. Conscious that he was losing ground every moment, Almachius

floundered and blundered on till Cecilia closed the interview by saying: "Since you first opened your mouth you have not uttered a word which I have not proved to be either unjust or unreasonable." Then, as concisely and coolly as a lawyer conducting a case, she summed up her proofs of the dead nothingness of the pagan idols, and ended with these words: "Christ alone can save from death, and deliver the guilty from eternal fire."

There ensued a long silence, during which Almachius considered how he could do away with her with the least amount of publicity and scandal. In his mind he already heard the Emperor's stinging reprimand for his folly in provoking a scene which could only result in casting obloquy on the deities worshipped (or rather patronised) by Alexander himself, and in the condemnation of a beautiful and virtuous lady beloved by all the people. Cecilia stood undisturbed while her enemy pondered her fate. She had done with earth; she had vindicated Heaven; her thoughts were there.

At last Almachius gave some whispered orders to his satellites, and Cecilia, in her litter, since no Roman lady could walk through the public streets, carried by her devoted, heart-broken servants, was sent back to her palace under a heavy guard, among whom were those who had consented to act as her executioners. These hurried to that one of the marble bathrooms called the "calidarium," disposed to produce the fierce heat of a steam bath. The opening in the gilded ceiling, intended to moderate the temperature when necessary, was hermetically closed, and every conduit and furnace heated to raging point. When the suffocating fumes had so filled the place that no one dared go in, Cecilia was commanded to enter.

She passed in, smiling, and was lost to view in the dense cloud of steam; then the entrance was closed and a guard set over it that none of those who were mourning and weeping all through the halls and courts of the palace might either set her free or share her end. For the rest of the day and all the ensuing night the tormentors continued to pile the fires, till it seemed as if the heat must crack the very marble. No sound came from the sealed room, and at sunrise the next day the executioners were convinced that their work was done. Nothing mortal could survive in that furnace.

So they opened the door — and Cecilia, radiant and fresh as a rose washed in dew, knelt there in prayer, her lovely face raised to Heaven, her pure hands clasped in love and thanksgiving. Terrified, the men rushed to tell Almachius of the portent.

"Let a Lictor go and behead her!" was all he said. Some man was found to do it — though unwillingly, since even the most brutal and ignorant felt that here was one mysteriously protected by Heaven — and might not Heaven — even the Heaven of Jupiter and Apollo — smite him who should raise his hand against her? Still, orders were orders. In the soft May morning a heavy tread sounded over the mosaic pavements of the palace. The sweet lady's friends and dependents cried out as they saw a man stride along towards the "calidarium" — where, in obedience to the Prefect's commands, she had remained — swinging a heavy two-handled axe. The Christians who were the trophies of her conquests for Christ besought her, between their sobs, to pray for them in Heaven. She bade them be comforted — smiling radiantly and mysteriously — and knelt down on the still wet marble to receive the blow.

But the Lictor's hands were trembling so that he could scarcely grasp his weapon. Three times he struck, and each time the steel sank deep into the meek white neck, and the blood crimsoned the golden robe and the marble floor. Then he fled in terror. The Roman law forbade a fourth stroke. Cecilia was lying on the reddened marble, on her side, Urban and the rest kneeling around her. And it was she who broke the silence, bidding them pray to God and then listen to her, since she still had somewhat to say to them. Some among them were yet in need of instruction, many in need of comfort and encouragement; so she taught and prayed, and comforted them for three long days, never moving from the spot where she had sunk down under the strokes of the axe; and they were left in peace, since cold fear had fallen on the city and none dared approach Cecilia's house to ask how it fared with her.

During all this time her face showed that she was suffering the agonies of death, though she found her old sweet smile for each and all of her spiritual children and her beloved poor, as they crowded round her to kiss her garments and try to staunch her wounds, and to dip their linen cloths in the treasure of her blood. Her last endearments were for the poor, and whatever remained of her own properties in the house she now commanded to be given to them. Each word she spoke seemed as if it must be the last, yet still she lived — and smiled, and blessed them.

On the third day, a great wonder being on all that assemblage, she bade them leave her for a while, and the holy Pope Urban came and prayed with her and blessed her. And he begged her to tell him how it was that she had survived those cruel strokes so long. And

Cecilia, looking up at him most lovingly, replied: "I asked the Lord to give me these three days, that I might give to your Beatitude my last treasure, the poor whom I nourished, and who will miss me; and I also give you this my house that you may consecrate it to be a Church to the Lord for ever and ever." Then she thanked her Saviour for all His love, and especially for having "deigned to give her a part in the glory of the athletes, for having crowned her with the lilies of virginity and the roses of martyrdom." A little faintness came over her then. She had never moved from the attitude in which she had fallen, and was lying on her right side, but her hands had been raised in prayer. Now they fell, still clasped, on the folds of the golden robe so rosy with blood; she turned her lovely face to the ground, that only God might see the ecstasy of her reunion with Him, and thus she died.

Pope Urban attended personally to every detail of her burial. A cypress-wood coffin was prepared, and in this she was laid by the priests in attendance. Urban would not permit any change from the attitude of virginal modesty in which she had expired, so with tender care the consecrated hands raised her and laid her body in the coffin, just as it was, on the right side, with the face turned to the ground. The cloths dipped in her blood were rolled up and placed at her feet, a profusion of rich ointments and perfumes was shed around her, and then the fragrant casket was closed. Under cover of night the Pontiff had it carried out to the cemetery of Saint Calixtus on the Appian Way, wishing to honour her zealous apostleship for Christ by burying her close to the tomb where he had laid his predecessor, the martyr Pope, St. Zephyrinus. The cemetery of Pretextatus, where Valeri-

anus and Tiburtius had been buried, was close at hand, and Urban, to commemorate the pure love that had united them on earth, made Cecilia's tomb at the extreme confine of the Calixtus catacomb, where its direction turned towards the older one. Fearing desecration, perhaps prophetically foreseeing that which threatened the resting-places of martyrs in the invasion of the Arian heretics some two hundred years later, he closed the tomb with one large slab of stone and left it for the moment bare of all inscription; doubtless he intended to place one there immediately, but had no time to do so before his own death.* Those who had loved her needed not to see her name; they came day after day to weep there and ask for her prayers; but God had inspired His servant to protect and hide her blessed remains from all the enemies of the Church.

It seems as if St. Urban's own life had been prolonged thus far that he might not only carry out this pious task, but also fulfil Cecilia's last commands by giving the remainder of her goods to the poor and by consecrating as a Church the house in which she died. A short month later he was taken and brought, with some of his Deacons, before Almachius, to answer to two charges, that of being a Christian, and that of having seized Cecilia's property, which the covetous Prefect had counted on securing for himself. The usual farce of a trial ensued; the confessors were dragged out to the Pagus Triopius and on their refusing to sacrifice to Jupiter, savagely scourged. One of them, Lucian, died under the lash; Urban and

* This hypothesis appears to me more reasonable than the one usually put forward, viz: That Cecilia's inscription was destroyed by the Goths. They destroyed many such inscriptions, with the tombs that bore them, but the resting-place of St. Cecilia when discovered showed no marks of violence and answered precisely to the contemporary description of it.

the others were beheaded, in another spot, three days later.

Valerianus and his brother had suffered on the 18th of April, Cecilia a week or more after them, and St. Urban and his companions on the twenty-fifth day of May. St. Cecilia's name was inserted at once in the Canon of the Mass, where only those of six out of the thirty martyr Popes were admitted. Agnes precedes her; Anastasia, burnt alive on Christmas Day, under Diocletian, follows; and three hundred years later St. Gregory inserted those of the two Sicilian martyrs, Agatha and Lucy; but none inscribed on that sacred list which the priest repeats every morning at Mass eclipses the name of Cecilia. Her house has never ceased to be "A Church of the Lord," as she ordained; every year on her feast, the most glorious music resounds there, and many a time have I been one of the crowd gathered on the 22d of November to listen to the finest singers in Rome gathered to do her honour, because she loved to praise the Lord in song and psalm. The anniversary of her death often coincides with the great feasts of the Ascension and of Pentecost, and, for some reason, of which we have lost the clue, the 22d of November was fixed for the celebration of it. On that day not only in her Church is she glorified, but also in the cemetery where her body lay for some five hundred years and which is brilliantly illuminated and a grand musical Mass sung there in her honour.

Yet, for centuries that blessed tomb was lost and none could pray beside it. Every word, almost every look and gesture of Cecilia's last days on earth, was written in the "Acts of the Martyrs," that enormous collection of archives instituted by St. Clement, who appointed

seven holy and learned notaries to take down at once even the smallest details connected with the trial and sufferings of the Christian victims, a work zealously continued by all the succeeding Pontiffs, one of whom, Anterus, was put to death solely on this charge. The "Acts of the Martyrs," as we possess them to-day, were finally compiled in the Fourth or early part of the Fifth Century. The Latin, though vivid and powerful, is already notably defective, ungrammatical, but not as debased as it became at the beginning of the Sixth Century. The great masters of language in the Fourth Century — St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and St. Jerome — were eager to preserve the purity of the Latin tongue, but their contemporaries all over the Empire, either through ignorance or carelessness, spoke and wrote an idiom as far removed from that of the Golden Age of Augustus as is fashionable English to-day from that of Addison and Pope. Is our misuse of our own noble tongue the cause, or the effect, of political degeneration? One thing is certain, the slaughter of its language has invariably accompanied the downfall of a State.

When the Goths invaded Rome in the Fifth Century their Arian fury was especially directed at all that Catholics held sacred, barring only the Tombs of the Apostles, which they feared to profane. They raged through the Catacombs in the hope of finding plunder, or else some secret ingress to the city; the Christians, warned of their approach, had time to fill up and close the entrance of a few of the cemeteries, among others of that where Cecilia's body lay. As a result, the pilgrims were unable to visit these underground sanctuaries for many years, and when peace was restored to the Church, and the bodies of many martyrs brought back to the city, all but

the vaguest clue to her resting-place was lost, though it was sought for eagerly and persistently. Her Church — the "House where Cecilia prayed"*— was ever protected from destruction and continually resounded with prayer and praise, but it was empty of the treasure of her remains. As time went on, almost all the bones of the martyrs had been restored to the piety of the Faithful in the different Churches and Basilicas of Rome; the sanctuaries ruined and desecrated by the Goths and Lombards had been rebuilt; the Catacombs reopened and partially restored; so that, although they would never again inspire quite the veneration with which they had been regarded before the Barbarians defaced and defiled them, yet pilgrims, with their strange old guidebooks to direct their steps, would visit the places which had been hallowed by those noble presences in past ages.

In 817 Pope Paschal ascended the throne, and made it his especial duty to rescue from the Catacombs any holy relics that still remained there. Great was his desire to find the tomb of St. Cecilia; he sought for it long and patiently, and seems to have passed it more than once, owing to its lack of inscription. He had already rebuilt her Church, which had suffered much from time, and decorated it magnificently, but it seemed destined to be deprived of the honour of sheltering all that earth still held of her. In great depression he, with many others, came to the conclusion that her body must have been

* It is amusing to note in this connection the statement in Baedeker's guidebook for Rome, p. 422: "St. Cecilia in Trastevere—originally a dwelling house, which was converted into a Church by Urban I., *who was misled by the erroneous tradition that St. Cecilia had once occupied it.*" The italics are my own. Such ignorance of history requires no comment.

carried away by the Lombards when Charlemagne drove them out of Italy.

And then Cecilia herself re-animated him to the search. He has left us an enchanting description of her visit. On a certain Sunday morning, very, very early, Pope Paschal was sitting in St. Peter's, near the Tomb of the Apostles, listening entranced to the sweet voices of the Canons, who were singing Lauds, the office with which the Church opens her day before the first gleam of light has come into the East. It was not the St. Peter's that we know, but the ancient Basilica founded by Constantine and consecrated in the year 326, vast and dark, with heavy Byzantine arches and windows closed by panes of thin Oriental alabaster. The good Pope speaks regretfully of a slight weariness which was creeping over him after the long night's vigil, and says that, just as the eastern windows became visible squares in the first faint flush of dawn, he was overcome with drowsiness and closed his eyes, so that the soaring music became the music of dreams.

Then a luminous vision appeared: a young virgin, adorned as a bride, stood before Paschal, and, after reproaching him with his too easy abandonment of the task he had undertaken, said: "Nevertheless, thou wast so near me that we could have spoken mouth to mouth!"

Amazed and agitated, Paschal asked her who she was. She replied, "Cecilia, the servant of Christ." But the prudent Pontiff, knowing that all visions are not of Heaven, and fearing a snare of the Evil One, said: "How can I believe thee? All men say that the body of the holy Cecilia was carried away by the Lombards."

Very gently she replied that the Lombards had indeed sought for her, but that the Blessed Virgin had protected

her sepulchre, so that they had not found it. She bade him persevere in his search, which she promised should soon be rewarded, and commanded him to bring her body and those of "other Saints near her" to her own Church. Then she disappeared, and Paschal, greatly rejoiced, went forth, and straightway returned to the ground over which he had gone so many times in vain. In the cemetery of St. Calixtus he now noticed a nameless tomb, which he had never connected in his mind with that of the Saint, because of its extreme bareness and apparent obscurity. He now realised that this must be what he had been seeking. The slab was at once removed from the wall, disclosing a marble-lined recess, in which a little chest of cypress-wood, just over four feet long, reposed without a trace of age or decay.

Very carefully it was lifted down and placed at Paschal's feet. The opening of it presented some difficulty, but when the cover was removed, a strong fragrance of roses and lilies came welling up from the interior. Then the Pope and his assistants beheld Cecilia, lying like a child asleep, her head turned down, her hands folded, her robe, tinged with blood, outlining the modest grace of her young body. That was whole and sweet as on the day when Urban laid it away hundreds of years before; no decay or corruption had been suffered to approach it. All was as on the day of her death, from the great wounds in her neck to the gold embroidery on her dress, and at her feet were the rolls of linen steeped in her blood.

They brought her, with great and reverent rejoicing, back to her own house, now the Lord's; they brought, too, the bodies of her beloved husband and his brother, and that of Maximus, the brave officer who had been charged

with their execution, but who chose to follow them to glory. For greater honour Paschal brought there the body of St. Urban and placed it with that of Cecilia and her comrade martyrs under the High Altar.

For Cecilia he prepared a white marble sarcophagus, and in this the little cypress-wood coffin * was placed. Paschal would not have her body touched, and left her as she had lain ever since that sad and glorious May morning six hundred years before; but he lined the sides of the coffin with a rich damask silk with fringed edges, and spread over her a great veil of silk also, but diaphanously thin, and this too was delicately fringed. All these details so carefully set down at the time were destined to be of great value, not only as aids to identification in after years, but as testimonies to the immeasurable reverence with which the Church regarded the bodies of the martyrs in the early ages.

After gazing for the last time at her pure loveliness, Paschal closed the sarcophagus with a marble slab, and then, with no less love and reverence, placed the bodies of her three heroes — Valerianus, Tiburtius, and Maximus — in another sarcophagus, "all together, but each wrapped in a separate winding sheet." For St. Urban a third marble coffin was made, but — a little touch of human nature that brings a smile and a tear — Paschal feared he "might be lonely" in it, and brought the body of one of his martyred successors, Lucius, to lie beside him, though he is careful to tell us that they too had each "a separate winding sheet!"

The three sarcophagi were placed below the High Altar in the Church now called St. Cecilia in Trastevere;

* The coffin is four feet, three inches long, thirteen inches broad, and seventeen inches high.

a marble tablet, inscribed with a cross, the martyrs' names, and the account of their sepulture in this spot, was duly placed near them, and then a strong circular wall was built all around and closed up, so that none could enter the tomb. But just above it, in the pavement of the Church, a small grating opened on a long funnel-like aperture through which, according to ancient custom, the Faithful could lower strips of linen to rest for a moment on the marble coffins, and then be withdrawn and carried away as precious souvenirs of the holy ones lying therein.

The Church is one of the most interesting in Rome to the Catholic Pilgrim; as a well-known Protestant writer * says: "The traveller who tries to overlook Catholicity in his sightseeing in Rome, misses all that is most interesting to see." Paschal lavished splendid gifts on the Church he so dearly loved. The chroniclers have left us minute descriptions of the gold and the silver, the marvellously embroidered vestments and hangings that he provided for it, and his successors adorned it with lovely paintings and mosaics as time went on, but the best offering of all was Paschal's own. That Cecilia's last wish might be carried out and "the praises of the Lord sound there forever," he built and endowed a monastery close by and established there a choir of monks, who sang those praises night and day from that time forth.

Then he passed away, to be greeted in Heaven by those whom he had so loved to honour upon earth. There had been many martyrs — so many that only the Angels could count them — but none greater, more glorious, more dear to God and beloved of men, than Cecilia.

* Augustus Hare.

The devotion to her spread rapidly over Europe; Britain, France, and Germany emulated Italy in honours paid to her, and many churches boasted, in perfect good faith, that they possessed some of her relics. We know, not only from Paschal's account, but from the eye-testimony of witnesses quite near to our own times, that only one tiny fragment of her blessed human frame — and that by accident — was ever parted from the rest; but we know, too, that the Church counts three other Cecilias, two of them Roman, among the known martyrs. Their relics were borne away for veneration, and time caused their origin to be so far forgotten that they were for centuries regarded as belonging to the Roman heroine of the Third Century.

Pope Paschal died in 824. The monastery which he had founded passed away from the Benedictines, was made into a Collegiate Church, was restored to the Benedictines — and had to be abandoned during the stirring years of the first part of the Sixteenth Century, because the zealous sons of St. Benedict had so many institutions to attend to that their numbers no longer sufficed for the work to be done. The Church of St. Cecilia, in 1532, had fallen into such decay that it was barely possible to celebrate her feast there any longer, and this in spite of the fact that it was still considered the most honourable "Titular Church" in Rome.* On the 19th of December, 1590, Gregory XIV, who had been made Pope on the fifth day of that month, conferred the cardinal's hat on the son of his brother, the young Paul Emilius Sfondrato, with the "Titular" of St. Cecilia,

*Every Cardinal takes his title from one or other of the ancient Churches — hence the term "Titular Cardinal of St. Cecilia," "of St. Clement," etc., etc.

which the Pontiff had himself held before his election to the Papacy. The Sfondrati were a Milanese family, but Paul had already spent much time in Rome under the spiritual tutorship of St. Philip Nerim, and he joyfully hastened thither in response to his uncle's summons. The young Cardinal was already famous for his wisdom and learning, but still more so for his goodness and his tender charity to the poor. His two leading motives in life were the honouring of God and the Saints, and the relief of suffering. We read that he built and decorated church after church, recking nothing of spending a great part of his large fortune on the House of God and the dwellers therein, at the same time denying himself every sort of luxury and living like a poor man in order that the poor might not be defrauded of their share of the goods which he considered he only held in trust for the Lord.

One of his first resolves on coming to Rome in 1591 was to rebuild the almost ruinous Church of St. Cecilia, and, while doing so, to find her tomb, of which the exact location had been lost in the eight hundred years that had elapsed since Paschal closed it. Other traces of her presence had also disappeared, and it was reserved for Sfondrato to rediscover the bathroom where she had expired. At first a chapel had been built over it, but with succeeding modifications this had been pulled down and the space incorporated in the Church, and, although there were old men then alive who remembered having prayed there in their childhood, it was only after much study of the ancient and actual topography that Sfondrato was led to the correct spot. There, however, all doubts were set at rest. He found the "calidarium," of the small size adapted to a private dwelling, with its marble

floor, its great boiler, and the remains of the leaden and earthenware pipes through which the steam percolated into the bathroom. When the rubbish was cleared away it was easy to call up the touching scenes it had witnessed in those May days fourteen hundred years earlier.

The pious Cardinal, wishing to place under the High Altar of the restored basilica some precious relics of other saints, commanded the workmen to take up the pavement, so that the supposed space below could be utilised for this purpose. They found, however, that there was only a very small recess there, and that all further excavation was arrested by a thick rounded wall of exceedingly solid material. Sfondrato at once realised that this must be the barrier mentioned in Paschal's account of the burial of St. Cecilia by himself, and directed the masons to make some aperture in the wall, through which a glimpse might be obtained of that which it protected. At the same time he was so scrupulous as to the respect to be shown to the martyr that he forbade the men to strike a blow of any kind except in his own presence.

At last, on the twentieth day of October, 1599, an opening was effected, and Paul Sfondrato, looking through it with beating heart and straining eyes, beheld by the light of a taper that for which he had sought so eagerly — two large white marble sarcophagi, standing side by side immediately below the High Altar. St. Cecilia and her companions were undoubtedly there, just as Paschal had placed them, but the prudent Cardinal would not open their tombs except in the presence of eminent and reliable witnesses. Curbing his impatience, he sent for four learned and holy men — the Bishop who was acting

as Vicegerent of the Cardinal Vicar, a Canon of St. John Lateran, and two Fathers of the Society of Jesus. Many others came with them, but a palpitating silence reigned in the vault while the workmen removed the marble slab from the coffin nearest the entrance and disclosed, to eyes already misty with tears, the little cypress casket, so touchingly small, in which Urban had laid the dear saint on her "Natal Day."

With extreme precaution this was lifted out, but the perfumed wood proved to be perfectly solid, as if put together the day before, only the cover showing some slight marks of the flight of time. At first this cover baffled all efforts to remove it; it held tightly, but with no visible fastening. Finally Sfondrato himself found out the secret — it had been contrived to slip along two perfectly fitted lateral grooves — and with his own hands drew it off and looked at last on the body of St. Cecilia, perfect, untouched, lovely, and at rest like that of a sleeping child. Every detail of Paschal's description was verified. The gold embroidery of her dress showed a little dulled through the airy veil he had thrown over her, and his fringed damask lining was slightly faded; otherwise no change had been suffered to approach her whom the Lord so loved. From the last few moments before her death no one had ever looked on her face, so pathetically turned to the ground, and none could see now more than the soft outline of the rounded cheek and the indication of the temple. Her little hands lay together, and now for the first time it was noticed that her very last movement must have been a confession of faith, for of one hand three fingers were distended, of the other, one — to symbolise the Trinity in Unity. And the last crowning sweetness was not wanting. As soon as the small

coffin was opened a heavenly fragrance as of freshly gathered lilies and roses welled out from it and filled all the place.

With joy too great and tender to find words, Sfondrato and his companions carried the precious casket up to the light of day, and deposited it for safety in the small chapel with grated windows where the nuns of the contiguous convent were accustomd to assist at Mass. Raised on a daïs hung with rich silk, surrounded with lighted tapers that shed a soft glow all around, half smothered in flowers, Cecilia lay there while all Rome, beside itself with joy, came to gaze upon her and entreat her prayers. No perfumes were permitted to be used, since the heavenly fragrance of roses and lilies still emanated from the coffin. The nuns knelt round her for a guard of honour, and soon the great Pope Clement VIII, who had barely recovered from a severe illness, travelled in from Frascati to pray beside her.

The times were very evil just then for him and for the Church; Calvinism was devastating France and threatening to give her a sovereign dyed in its abominable impieties; England, Holland, Scandinavia, and a great part both of Germany and Switzerland were altogether lost to the faith and had become the bitterest enemies of the Church, and impious hands were scattering the bones of the saints on the public highways. Only two months had elapsed since the ghastly tragedy of the Cenci had thrown a pall of gloom over Rome itself; but everything was forgotten in the joy of having the beloved Cecilia's remains restored to the veneration of her people. Clement himself, the "hard, stern" old man, was completely overcome when he beheld her; his tears choked his speech. The Romans of every class thronged

to the place in such numbers that Sfondrato himself was almost crushed to death in the crowd and the Pontifical Swiss Guards had to be stationed there to keep order. Such was still the enthusiastic love with which our forbears regarded all that was dear to God!

Clement, with rare restraint, forbade that even the veil which covered the virgin's body should be lifted, but he permitted Sfondrato to remove the linen cloths rolled up at her feet, to be distributed to such as were worthy to possess these sacred souvenirs. The Cardinal gave away all but one piece, a little rag that he had reserved for himself; another Cardinal, a great historian, was present at the scenes I have described and tells us that Sfondrato was rewarded for all his love and charity by finding, adhering to this fragment, a tiny particle of bone, which must have detached itself under the hand which was tenderly attempting to staunch one of the wounds inflicted by the Lictor's axe. This is the only relic of the saint which was ever separated from her body, and no greater treasure could she have bestowed on her faithful servant. He bequeathed it to her Church, where his own body finally found a resting-place, like that of Clement, at her feet. He also cut off a tiny piece of her dress, and, as he did so, felt beneath it the knots of the hair shirt which she continually wore to mortify her innocent flesh.

The bodies of Valerianus, Tiburtius, and Maximus were found in the second sarcophagus, everything about them testifying to the truth of the records of their martyrdom. The two brothers were exactly alike, as tradition recorded, in form and size, while Maximus was a much larger, heavier man. The manner of his martyrdom was also attested, the leaden plummets of the whips having fractured his skull in several places, so that the

thick brown hair, which was perfectly preserved, was all matted with blood and particles of bone. Urban and Lucius were found buried directly below Cecilia's resting-place. To this her body was returned a month later, when on her feast, the 22d of November, the Pope, with all the Cardinals and a great concourse of bishops and prelates, came to celebrate the Holy Mysteries and, for the third time since her death, consign the dear maid's body to the keeping of earth. Clement enclosed the little cypress-wood coffin in one of silver, superbly ornamented with gold — enclosed this in a newer and larger marble sarcophagus (the old one being too small for the double treasure), inscribed on a silver tablet the record of all that had taken place, sealed the whole with his Pontifical seal, and had the vault built over once more, not to be opened again, God willing, till the Last Day.*

Before closing the saint's coffin, Clement sent for the eminent sculptor, Maderno, and commissioned him to model a statue as like as possible to the fair body that lay there, but forbade him to remove the veil. Maderno hastened to obey, and the statue now in the Church and known by thousands of reproductions all through the artis-

* The Acts of St. Cecilia have always been considered among the most absolutely authentic of those preserved by the Church, and every circumstance connected with the finding of her body, both by Paschal and Sfondrato, bears them out. Tillesnaut, the lying Jansenist historian so dear to heretic students, and who seems to have had a particularly malevolent hatred for St. Cecilia, has made a ludicrous attempt to prove — if such arguments could be called by that name — that St. Cecilia was not a Roman, and as we know her never existed. He supports this amazing theory on one line many times re-copied by ignorant scribes, of the poet Fortunatus, who speaks of "St. Cecilia" as having suffered in "Sicilia." The Church knows of no Sicilian martyr of that name, but there was one in Sardinia, a name which one of Fortunatus' copyists apparently mistook for "Sicilia."

tic world, is an exact portrait of Cecilia, with every detail of pose and garments, as then shown, faithfully represented. Baronius and Bosio, to whom he related them, have minutely chronicled all the circumstances connected with the second finding of her body.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH UNDER CONSTANTINE

Constantine's Edict—St. Sylvester, the Friend of Constantine—Refuge at Soracte—The Emperor's Vision—"In Hoc Vinces"—Constantine's Baptism—The Church Has Peace—Helena's Basilica—The Blessing of the Golden Rose—Origin of St. Peter's—The Obelisk from Heliopolis—Testimony of the Dust of the Martyrs—The Place of the Shock of Horses—The Beauty of St. Peter's—Pilgrims from Britain—Charlemagne, the Blessed.

"AND the Church had peace!" Those few words are all that are used to describe the overwhelming relief of the world when Constantine caused his great edict to be proclaimed throughout the Empire. "Let none henceforth dare to molest the Christians in the exercise of their religion or in the building of Temples to God."

The frightful persecution under Diocletian, more cruel and bloody than all that had preceded it, had been continued by his successor Galerius,* and was still active, still a living menace to the faithful; and, as they had done so often during the past three hundred years, they had to fly to their underground refuges or out into the desert to call upon the rocks and mountains to cover them. St. Melchiades, whom St. Augustine calls "the true son of the Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ," became Pope in 311 and suffered such great tribulations for the faith in

* Galerius, on his deathbed, by the so-called "Edict of Sardis," disavowed his errors and proclaimed liberty for the Christians, but the war against them was still carried on both by the usurping Emperors who were Constantine's rivals, and by the hatred of the still powerful pagan Governors.

the beginning of his pontificate that the Church reckons him among the martyrs, although he lived to see her triumph, dying only in 313. To him succeeded Sylvester, the great ruler, the friend of Constantine, whose name is so intimately connected with the foundation of the two chief basilicas of Christendom, that of St. John Lateran and that of St. Peter's.

Before being called to the Papacy, St. Sylvester had been a zealous and holy priest for many years, but during a part of that time he had been obliged to live in hiding on Mount Soracte, the strange rock which raises itself from the Campagna, some twenty-five miles to the northeast of Rome, to culminate in a precipitous cliff two thousand two hundred and seventy feet high — as if arrested by the sight of the distant city. I think it was Byron who compared it to a wave about to break, and no other simile describes it half so well. I spent a heavenly day there in my youth and came away regretfully, not only because of the superb view of the Apennine panorama at which I had been gazing, but because of the ideal aloofness and sweetness of the atmosphere round the ruined convent on the summit, where, though I was then in the first flush of youth, I would gladly have remained for years. Soracte, under its present name, was well known to the Romans; Horace had sung of the mantle of the snow that lay on its rough sides in the winter; Virgil spoke of it reverently as one of the homes of Apollo, who had a temple there; so its name is not a contraction of St. Oreste, as some used to think, though a Church and monastery were dedicated to that saint on Soracte very early in our era. The monk who acted as our guide could not tell me much about him, but spoke of St. Sylvester's sojourn on the mountain as if he had

left it but the day before. The lonely peak was not always lonely, the geologists say. Long ages previous to the foundation of Rome the Apennines flung out their chain thus far; then came great heavings in earth's fiery heart; she opened and the hills sank back whence they had come, and "the mountains were made plain"; they disappeared, leaving this solitary vanguard rock to mark their vanished limit and their actual sepulchre.

How gladly must Sylvester have sped back to Rome over the long Milvian Way, as soon as he could resume his sacred duties in the city! He must have been there when Constantine, with his great host, paused at the "Saxa rubra" (the red rocks over which I have often wandered, seeking for wild flowers), near the Milvian Bridge, depressed and anxious, and very fearful that the army he led was not strong enough to overcome the usurper, Maxentius, who had fortified himself behind its walls. In this month of May, 1913, Catholics from all over the world are thronging to Rome to take part in the sixteen-hundredth anniversary of that day. For Constantine, hesitating to attack, was standing without his camp, gazing at the western sky, towards which the sun was sinking, as the chroniclers tell us, thinking of what lay before him, thinking, too, of what lay behind — of the long years during which he had half believed in Christianity without being made a Christian; thinking of what would happen to his soul should he, still unbaptised, be slain in the now inevitable conflict; thinking, we may be sure, of his good mother, Helena, over there in Constantinople, storming Heaven with prayers for his safety. It was all enough to make even an Emperor thoughtful, and Constantine was a man who took both this life and the next very seriously.

Then, as officers and men watched their leader's face grow darker and more gloomy, and the reflection of his melancholy began to gain them all, " airy and excellent " the vision came. Resting on the setting sun as on a pedestal, and paling that glory by its own more dazzling splendour, a gigantic cross flamed out across the cloudless sky, and as all gazed, terror-stricken and breathless, these words wrote themselve in fire against the blue: " In hoc vinces " *—" In this thou shalt conquer! " The portent hung for many minutes, some say for an hour, and then slowly withdrew into the empyrean, and the empty sky and the empty Campagna, the gleaming host and the proud rebel city, alone remained.

And Constantine conquered. Maxentius, doomed, came out to meet him, and there was great slaughter, in which the upstart thief of the Purple died no honourable death, but was pushed off the bridge in the furious mêlée and choked in Tiber's mud. And Constantine caused the Eagles to be replaced by the Cross on his standards, and entered in triumph to throw himself at the feet of Sylvester and, holding up his poor leprous † hands in piteous entreaty, to beg for health and baptism. Gladly and with great thanksgiving the Pope baptised him, and the water that washed away his sins cleansed his flesh, so that when he came up out of the sacred foun-

* These words are always quoted in Latin and so I transcribe them, but in reality they appeared in the Greek tongue.

† There is a mediæval legend that Constantine had been advised by the pagan priests to cure his leprosy by bathing in the blood of three thousand children, and that he was about to immolate that number for the purpose, when, his pity being aroused by the despair of their mothers, he forbade the sacrifice. That this is a pure invention is patent, for Constantine was a just and merciful man, even before his conversion, and, when he came to Rome, was familiar with the tenets of Christianity and well disposed to embrace them.

tain there was no mark of leprosy on his body or of guilt upon his soul —" and the Church had peace."

Constantine's first thought was now to honour God by some splendid testimony of his gratitude, and, under the direction of Sylvester, he built the Basilica of the Holy Saviour, called also St. John's before the Latin Gate. It was here that the evangelist suffered martyrdom in intention, was cruelly scourged, and plunged in boiling oil. God saved his life in order that he might write his sublime last book in the solitude of the Isle of Patmos, whither the persecutors exiled him after their attempts to slay him had failed; and to him, the beloved Virgin disciple, Constantine dedicated this, his first thank-offering, called ever since " the Mother of all the Churches in the World."

After that came Constantine's own mother, Saint Helena, to Rome, having, to her eternal glory, discovered the Saviour's Cross in Jerusalem and desiring to bring a part of that sacred Tree to the centre of Christendom.

Standing on the green terrace at the southern end of Constantine's Basilica, she saw a great empty space, beyond which, at the other end of the long decline that sinks away from it towards the southeast, there stood a half-ruined villa; there she resolved to raise the trophy of her own gratitude and to provide a fitting shrine for the inestimable treasure she had brought. But the Cross was still to rest on the soil that Jesus had trod. She caused a shipload of earth to be brought from Jerusalem, and on this the foundations of the Basilica of the Holy Cross were laid, contiguous to a palace which was her chosen dwelling during her sojourn in Rome. The Basilica, so frequently rebuilt and restored that probably

no part of the exterior would now be recognised by the pious Empress, is dark and bare, but symmetrical in outline and possessing a severe dignity of its own. It presents a marked contrast to the florid yet noble southern portico of St. John Lateran, and the long green avenue, shaded by double rows of mulberry trees, which used to connect the two, seemed to lead the spirit by fitting degrees from the splendid stability of Catholic worship to-day to the sterner conditions of that long-vanished past.

Until the Papacy transferred its seat to Avignon, the green plain between Helena's Basilica and the Lateran was, once a year, the scene of a beautiful and mystical ceremony. On the Fourth Sunday in Lent, when the Church, to encourage her children in their forty days' career of penance, replaces her sombre vestments by those of crimson and gold reserved for great feasts, when the organ, dumb since Ash Wednesday, once more fills the cathedrals with joyous music, when the Mass begins with the command to rejoice — then the Pope, accompanied by the Cardinals, went to the " Mother of all the Churches," St. John Lateran, and there, with a prayer of wonderful beauty, blessed and sanctified the " Golden Rose." The rose being the emblem of Divine love, shedding around the sweet fragrance of charity, often found a place in the ceremonial of the Church. For this particular occasion a cunning jeweller fashioned a flower in pure gold, blossom and leaf and stem, and the Pontiff prayed to the Creator of all beautiful things, who was Himself the true Joy and Hope of His children, to bless the flower carried as a sign of spiritual joy, in order that the faithful, contemplating it, might raise their hearts to the heavenly Jerusalem, and persevere in the sweet

odour of good works until they should be eternally united to Him who is the flower come forth from the branch of Jesse, who called Himself the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley; and that, in the company of all the blessed, they might glorify forever the Divine Flower who shall reign in Heaven eternally.

When the prayers were over, the Pope came forth from the Lateran, wearing the mitre and holding the Golden Rose in his hand; mounting his white palfrey, and accompanied by the whole Pontifical Court, he rode down the green way to the Basilica of the Holy Cross. There he preached a sermon on the virtues symbolised by the rose (there is still one of these sermons extant, delivered by Innocent III) and then celebrated Holy Mass. When that was over, he returned on horseback, still holding the Golden Rose and followed by the whole gorgeous cavalcade to St. John Lateran, where, if some royal prince happened to be present, his was the honour of assisting the Holy Father to dismount, and he received, in reward for his filial piety, the Golden Rose from the Pope's own hands.

In our days the ceremony of blessing the Rose takes place in a hall of the Vatican, and the Holy Father sends it as a gift usually to some Catholic princess — I remember that a few years ago he sent one to our little English Queen of Spain. I heard of another, and a very touching, present sent by Leo XIII to a royal lady who was awaiting the birth of her child — the baby's entire layette, marvels of beauty worked by the nuns, and all blessed by the Holy Father for the small Christian who was to wear the garments!

After founding the Church of St. John Lateran, the zeal of Constantine led him to build another and greater

one over the tomb of St. Peter. For this the tomb itself served as a nucleus, and Constantine would have no hands but his own dig the beginning of the foundations. "Laying aside the chlamys" (the mantle on which were embroidered the insignia of his rank) "he opened the earth for the construction of the Basilica. Then he carried away on his own shoulders twelve basketfuls of earth, in honour of the twelve Apostles." The work thus inaugurated was continued under his direction. The body of the blessed Apostle was at this time brought back from the Catacombs to its original resting-place with great glory, and encased in a magnificent silver coffin which in its turn was placed inside a sarcophagus of gilt bronze. Constantine forbade any but the priests to touch the sarcophagus, under pain of severe punishment. At one point on the way, the bearers seemed to be wavering a little, and a common workman, forgetting the Emperor's orders, stretched out his hand to steady it. There was no need for Constantine to punish him, for the poor fellow's hand shrivelled up at the contact, only to be restored after earnest prayers for forgiveness of this irreverence.

The incident may be legendary, but it reminds me of a later and more authentic one connected with the obelisk which stands in the centre of the Piazza of St. Peter's. This huge monolith of red granite was brought by Caligula from Heliopolis — the scene of General Kléber's victory and violent death on the 14th of June, 1800, while Marengo was being fought and won. Its arrival caused great excitement in the imperial city and crowds went out to see it as it lay at Ostia in a ship built on purpose to carry it and, as Pliny informs us, "almost as long as the left side of the port of Ostia." Unlike most of the Egyptian obelisks, it bears no inscriptions of

any kind on its polished sides. It first stood in the Circus of Nero, on ground now covered by the Sacristy of St. Peter's, and it was only under Sixtus V, in 1586, that it was placed in its present position. Its enormous size and weight (about three hundred and twenty tons) made the moving and erection a labour of the greatest difficulty. The work was superintended by Fontana, the eminent architect, who employed eight hundred men and one hundred and fifty horses to drag it the short distance to the centre of the Piazza. Then came the raising and placing on the pedestal prepared for it, a task so delicate and anxious that Sixtus forbade any one, under pain of death, to utter a single word during the process. Slowly and unwillingly the huge thing submitted to be raised from the ground, but, before it had reached the perpendicular, that happened which the architect had not foreseen — the enormous cables began to stretch. The strain dragged on them so fearfully that in a few minutes they must have parted — and the obelisk would have thundered to the ground; but a brave sailor man, casting self-preservation to the winds, shouted, "Water on the ropes." Instantly he was obeyed; a thousand hands sent the buckets flying along, the cables were drenched, and they held till the giant rose obediently in air and settled squarely on its base. The grateful Pope sent for the brave sailor and asked his name and birthplace. "Bresca of Bordighera," was the answer. What he gave to Bresca, the chronicler has left to our imagination — probably enough to keep him in fat comfort to the end of his days; but to Bordighera, that garden of the Mediterranean shore, he gave the privilege of furnishing forever the palms used in the Church on Palm Sunday; and down to 1870 there came, every year, a ship to the mouth of the Tiber, full

to the gunwale with the Bordighera palm branches, which the nuns of Sant' Antonio wove and plaited into a thousand fanciful shapes, for use in the Palm Sunday procession at St. Peter's.

There is a touching story connected with the Piazza of St. Peter's. Twenty years or so before Sixtus V became Pope, the sainted Pius V was reigning Pontiff (1566-1572). He had a great devotion to the blessed martyrs — I remember possessing a little terra-cotta lamp ornamented with Christian emblems, found in the Catacombs, which he had taken in his hands and blessed for some pious soul. He often had to traverse the great Piazza in going and coming from the Vatican, and he never did so without thinking of all the brave Christian blood that had been shed there in the early times. One day he was walking across the Piazza deep in conversation with the Ambassador of the King of Poland, when suddenly he paused, remembering the soil on which they stood. The place was unpaved then, and the Pope, stooping down, took up a handful of earth which he gave to the Ambassador, saying: "Keep this dust, for it is composed of the ashes of the saints and steeped in the blood of the martyrs."

The Ambassador, as we gather, received the gift more with respect for the hand that offered it than for its own sake. He spread out his handkerchief, the Pope shed on it the handful of dust, and the courtly Pole rolled it up and put it in his pocket.

When he returned to his palace, he drew the packet out, doubtless wondering what he should do with the rather inconvenient contents. To his awe, the cambric was wet with blood. He spread it out — the earth had vanished and not a grain remained, but the handkerchief

was steeped in the brave blood that had been shed for Christ under Nero and that, as one writer says, "had sprung forth again to attest, in the face of heresy and schism, that the faith of the Church under Pius was the same as the faith of the Church under Peter."

Talking of Piazzas — the one which immediately conducted to that of St. Peter's has always been called "Piazza Scossa Cavalli," the place of the "shock of horses," and this is the story of how it obtained the name. Constantine's mother, Helena, was, like her son, somewhat tardy in openly professing Christianity, but her whole life after her baptism was devoted to the service of God, particularly in the direction of preserving and beautifying the holy places sanctified by the life and sufferings of the Redeemer. To her we owe the finding of the True Cross, the Crown of Thorns, and other instruments of the Passion; it was she who built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the one on Mount Calvary, spots which the pagans had marked for future identification and veneration by setting up idols to keep the Christians from praying there! Among other things she found on Mount Moriah the stone, scrupulously preserved by the ancestor-loving Jews, on which Abraham was preparing to sacrifice Isaac — the type of Christ — when the Angel staid his arm and told him that the Lord would prove his faith no further. This stone Helena conveyed to Rome, intending to place it in St. Peter's; but when the horses dragging the wagon which contained it reached this spot, still quite distant from the Basilica, they "jibbed," as we should say, and no power on earth could induce them to go a step further.

The Empress, her counsellors, and all the people took this as a sign that Heaven destined the consecrated stone

to remain in that place, and a church, "San Giacomo a Scossa Cavalli," was built and still stands there to shelter Abraham's Altar.

Constantine's Basilica rose in strength and beauty, and was consecrated in 326, thirteen years after that 13th of June, 313, when he had seen the vision. Although only half the size of the present Church, it was, until this was built, one of the three largest in Europe, the other two being those of Milan and Seville; strangely enough, the three were all of equal dimensions — three hundred and ninety-five feet long by two hundred and twelve in width. Eighty-six marble pillars divided the nave of St. Peter's from the aisles and supported the roof; and, like all the basilicas, it had a rich portico running all along its front, also decorated with columns. The interior was gorgeous with gold and Byzantine mosaic and precious marbles, and the Church itself was the centre of a great mass of other sumptuous buildings, chapels, and offices and monasteries, for the housing of the great body of ecclesiastics charged with the service of the Church and the keeping of the archives. The Basilica of Constantine was worthy of its founder, and many another royal and imperial head was bent there in worship during the centuries that followed; yet what storms and vicissitudes assailed it before it sank away to rise again, like the phœnix of old, in the glorious pile so dear to our hearts to-day! Constantine would not have believed — what it is hard for us to accept even on the word of those who saw it — that a time would come when Rome's rightful rulers would be constrained to withdraw not only from her, but from Italy, to govern the Church from Avignon; when the Mistress of the World would barely count thirty thousand souls within her walls, and the shepherds

of the Campagna should pasture their sheep on the rank grass that covered the steps of St. Peter's and all the ground around!

Were the spirits of the redeemed permitted to contemplate the crimes and sorrows of earth, how some of them would have wept over the apparent decay of this most sacred of fanes, the goal so eagerly sought by all pilgrims, gentle or simple, during the Ages of Faith!

Hither came Charlemagne, and many other great ones, both before and after him, some worthy of Heaven's favour, some in the rebellious attempt to enslave the Church and make her work for them instead of for Christ. But most entered St. Peter's with humble and sincere hearts and it is noticeable that, of the famous royal pilgrims, the larger part came from Britain. One of the first was Cadwalla, King of the Saxons, an ardent convert who travelled to Rome to be baptised at St. Peter's tomb, and was rewarded for his faith by dying immediately afterwards, "spotless among the sheep of Christ." Then we are told of the holy Cenred, who had renounced the throne of Mercia to become a monk in Rome and who, as a sign of his sincerity, cut off his flowing locks and laid them at the shrine of the Apostle; another Briton, good King Ina of Wessex, comes to pray, and to found a Church in honour of the Mother of God, so that his subjects who come on pilgrimage may have their own sanctuary to pray in and their own ground to receive their bodies should they die in Rome; Offa, the Saxon, comes to ask St. Peter to consider him as his vassal and Offa's realm as a loyal tributary of his own; and, almost greatest of all, in the year 854, our Holy Father, St. Leo IV, being the reigning Pope, there walks one day into Constantine's Basilica a big fair-haired Englishman

called Ethelwulf, leading a little boy, six years old, bright of eye and sturdy of limb, by the hand.

Behind them, in awed silence, comes a group of the white and ruddy warriors of the North, gazing in wonder at the splendid Church, full of treasures from East and West, such as they have never beheld before. They voice their admiration in gruff whispers in a strange tongue, unintelligible to the scattered worshippers around them, who, doubtless, watch them with some apprehension, asking themselves whether their coming be the herald of another Gothic invasion of Rome. But the leader of the strangers goes up to the High Altar and kneels for a space, the child kneeling too, but clinging tightly to his father's hand. Then the father stands up, and, addressing one of the attendant priests in clear Latin, asks to be taken to the Pope.

It is Ethelwulf, King of the Anglo-Saxons; he has come to ask the Holy Father to crown him; and the little boy, on whom the Pope smiles, and who receives the pontifical blessing so blithely, grows up to be Alfred the Great.

But among all the pilgrims of those ages the supreme figure is that of Charlemagne, the giant in heart and mind and body who declared that he only ruled to extend the reign of Christ on earth, and in his will left to his successors, as the most precious part of their heritage, the privilege of defending and sustaining the Church. He had passed away forty years before Ethelwulf brought his little son to Rome, but his greatness lived after him and none can doubt that Alfred pondered his wise laws and strove to imitate the wonderful combination of strength and justice and mercy of which he set the example. I saw his crown, in the Ambras collection at Vienna, a huge straight band of gold, large enough to

slip over an ordinary man's head and rest on his shoulders, heavy with barbaric jewels, big as plover's eggs, set in its circle. This was, I think, the one he brought to Rome, when having, as he put it, " with the help of God conquered the world," he came to ask St. Leo III to crown him and confirm his dominions. The portraits of him show us a man indeed eight feet tall, with a long face, light brown beard, and big anxious eyes — eyes that give one a glimpse of the great mind behind, ever asking itself if there were any of all the things that Heaven had asked of him left undone. One fault of his early life has been so often cast up at his memory that it is but right to mention it. When he was twenty-eight or twenty-nine, his mother, Bertrade, a Greek, persuaded him, apparently on the grounds of some irregularity in the marriage, to repudiate his queen, Himiltrude, and espouse another, of her choosing, called Hermengarde. The reigning Pope, Stephen IV, on learning of this action, reprimanded Charlemagne sharply and commanded him to send away Hermengarde and recall Himiltrude, which command the monarch obeyed, the second wife having held her place barely a year. After Himiltrude's death he made Liutgarde his queen; she also died, and Charlemagne married again, more than once, but never gave the state and title of queen to any woman after Liutgarde's death. He has been accused of having more than one wife at a time, but the most profound and impartial students of history declare that the case of Himiltrude and Hermengarde does not constitute bigamy and that there is no shadow of support for the calumny in the contemporary chronicles.

Charlemagne's private life has always been described as remarkably pure; his enactments against immorality

are terribly stringent, placing illicit connections between unmarried persons on the same footing as the breaking of the marriage vow; and more than once he published these enactments, intended to restrain the license of the nobles, in person, in full council of bishops and the nobles themselves, who, had his own morals been assailable, would not have hesitated to tell him, in their very outspoken way, to mend his practice before preaching to others. There is no record of even a murmur of the kind. Also during the time when, according to his detractors now, he was living in sin, he was the close friend and pupil of two holy Popes — St. Adrian I and St. Leo III, consulting them at every step and following their advice with devout punctiliousness; we know that the Roman Pontiffs never stood on ceremony when it was necessary to remonstrate with Sovereigns as to their morals; yet neither of these saints, supreme in Christendom, ever addressed a word of reproach to Charlemagne. On the contrary, they showed, in their relations with him, the greatest affection and respect. The question of his canonisation, in spite of his heroic virtues and the miracles worked at his intercession, the Church left where it was when Frederick Barbarossa, in the second half of the Twelfth Century, succeeded in having him canonised by one of the anti-Popes, Paschal III, an invalid proceeding, of course. But the Church calls him "The Blessed Charlemagne" and permitted his feast to be kept in numberless Churches of France and Germany; until our own days several French colleges celebrated it by a banquet at which the professors mingled on an equal footing with the most promising of their students. He founded the two great universities of Paris and Pavia, was deeply versed in theology and in such classical literature as was

available in the Ninth Century; and is perhaps best known to us moderns by his hymn to the Holy Ghost, which the Church uses not only at Pentecost, but on almost every day of the year, the immortal " Veni Sancte Spiritus " so dear to us all.

It would be too long a task to enumerate his labours and conquests for the faith; these are set forth in detail in the old Breviaries of France; it took him thirty-four years to subdue the idolatrous Saxons, alone, and the only penalty he imposed for the half of a lifetime spent in arduous struggles was that they should listen to instruction and embrace Christianity. Always hard on himself, fasting often for a week at a time, wearing, except on great occasions, rough, simple garments which, we are told, made him appear like one of the humblest of his subjects, his charity was all-embracing and reached to the confines of the known world. His honest humility made it dangerous to attempt to flatter him about his achievements. If any one spoke of his victories, he would point to the lance with which Longinus pierced the Saviour's side and which he always carried with him, and say, " Give God the glory — *that* is what overcame! "

Oh, that we might sometimes call up some of the great visions of the past! Surely there was never one more significant and impressive than on the day when Charlemagne, surrounded by his Paladins, knelt on the sacred stone (still marked in the portico of St. Peter's) and St. Leo took the heavy crown in his aged hands and placed it on that magnificent head. Charlemagne must have been one of those of whom the Prophet spoke, when he said that the kings of the earth should bring their honour and glory into Heaven. Would that he could return to us who so need to see, and so despair of seeing, a born

ruler, reigning for God. Like our own Arthur, beloved of grateful and worshipping humanity, the hope of his return never quite died out. In the places where he passed, flashing by at the head of his chosen Paladins, is it only fancy that still makes us hear the thunder of the hoof-beats, the echo of the voice "sweet in music, strong in speech," whose commands the world obeyed? the echo of the call of Roland's horn — when he blew that last blast and Charlemagne, hundreds of miles away, leapt forth with his peers to the rescue? They came too late. The last of the Paladins fell fighting at Roncesvalles, far from where Charlemagne lies with his fathers among the Savoyan hills, by the dreamy Lake of Bourget.

Never had monarch a fairer resting-place. In a long past summer I rowed across the lake to the lovely and splendid sanctuary, in the cool of the evening, when twilight was descending, mild as sleep, on the mountains; and earth and lake and sky were all one soft, mysterious blue. There were comrades with me, young and gay as I, but when we stood beside Charlemagne's tomb in the dim church, a great silence fell upon us. We felt, though we could not see, the great angels standing round that royal grave — guarding it till the day when he who lies there shall come forth, and all the generations that went before and have come after him shall hear from God the praise he would not take from men —"Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"

CHAPTER XII

STORY OF ALARIC

Pursuit of the Ideal—Alaric, the Friend of Theodosius—Theodosius' Dream—The Victory at the Birnbaumer Wald—Defection of Alaric—Pictures of the Plundering of Rome—Marcella and Principia—St. Peter's Treasures—Plans Against Africa—Alaric's Death and Last Resting-place.

WHEN Edmond Rostand, the truest poet of our latter day, wrote his "Princesse Lointaine," he embodied the most ideal passion of the human heart, the desire of beauty unseen. The Eternal City has again and again inspired a like overmastering longing; it has been called by other names — ambition, revenge, desire of conquest — but the primal sentiment, in the most notable cases at least, reveals itself as an imperative craving to behold and possess the highest. In the saints the aspiration leaps from earth to Heaven, for their eyes are opened to the reality and the shadow; but even among mortals denied the Divine Spark, this hunger for the best takes on something of the sublime and translates itself in actions not to be altogether accounted for by merely human motives. Such a mortal was Alaric, the Visigoth, whose name still sounds to us across the ages with compelling power. Driven by the spirit, earth-bound, yet ever straining at his bonds, fiercely ambitious yet ready to renounce the fruits of conquest when the Voice, unheard of others, bade him renounce, his career remains an unexplained mystery, unless we are willing to reckon with the supernatural to which he rendered such prompt

obedience when its commands penetrated the din of clamorous necessity and reached the ear of his soul.

His very advent has all the emblems of a portentous allegory. Over the last eastern spur of the Julian Alps the old Roman roadmakers had cut one of their splendid roads to connect the seat of Empire with the North. They worked along the lines of least resistance, thinking only of facilitating the movements of Roman troops, and not at all of possible invaders who might march down to Rome. On the crest of the pass they looked for a commanding spot to serve as the site for a garrison station; the season was early summer and their glance at once fell on an enormous pear tree, a dome of snowy blossoms visible for many a mile around. That decided the question, and they built their military hamlet beside it, and called it "At the Pear Tree," "Ad Pirum," a name which was afterwards bestowed on the whole district, which is known to us now as the "Birnbaumer Wald." To this station came, in the first days of September, 394 A.D., Theodosius the Great, to meet and subdue the "little Graunnarian Emperor," Eugenius, and his terrible dictator, Arbogast, in the "Battle of the Frigidus," which turned the course of European history and left the world — as Constantine had hoped to leave it — Christian and not pagan.

With Theodosius came a young Visigothic chieftain of noble birth, Alaric by name, commanding a company of his countrymen, the valiant warriors with whom Theodosius strove to surround himself when there was real fighting to be done. They called their young leader not "Alaric," but "Balthe," "the Bold," revered him as sprung from a line that had for its founders the gods of Walhalla, and were prepared to follow him to Heaven

or Hell. Whither they were to follow him in the end, I fancy, was decided on that September day when, having secured a spot for their camp and seen that all things were in order, he went and stood under the big pear tree and looked down on the beautiful vale of Carniola, flushing to harvest, rioting in fruit, sheltered on the north and east by the vigilant Alps, and cooled by the mighty rush of the Frigidus, which we call the Wipbach, and which bursts full-grown, ice-fed, from the foot of the hills, and dashes along under banks so teeming with fruit and grain, at that time of the year, as to be almost hidden from sight. Tearing down from the caves of Adelsberg, it follows the lie of the land till it enters Italy, changes name and nationality, becomes the Isonzo, and finally, joining the other streams flowing down from the north, empties itself into the Adriatic at Aquileia.

This is Alaric's first appearance in history, and we can hardly doubt that with his first view of the paradise that lay south of the Alps came also the first faint echo of the call that haunted him all his life, "Penetrabis ad Urbem"—"Thou shalt penetrate to the city"—the city towards which every northerner looked with covetous longing and superstitious fear, but which its own rulers, at least in Alaric's time, regarded rather as a venerable part of the insignia of the Empire than as an active agent in its affairs. Alaric, when he first looked towards Italy, was a loyal ally of Theodosius, and would have hotly resented the assertion that a day would come when he should sweep the country as an invader and a declared foe of the great man's son. But (how true is the Japanese proverb, "Great generals have no sons!") the feeble-minded Honorius again and again refused the honest alliance and friendship proffered by the Goth, and

was thus alone responsible for those terrible six days of sack and pillage which desolated Rome sixteen years (almost day for day) after Alaric had fought so wholeheartedly for Theodosius in the Battle of the Frigidus.

That was indeed a hard-fought fight; Arbogast knew every inch of the country, his troops outnumbered those of Theodosius, and the cunning old soldier had so disposed them that, unknown to the Emperor, they cut off every line of march save the narrow one by which he had come. The first day's fighting resulted in a practical defeat for the loyalists, and as the night came down and hostilities were necessarily suspended, Theodosius realised with anguish that the next day's sun would probably see paganism triumphant and the Cross of his standards trampled underfoot. He had lost great numbers of men; those who remained were deeply discouraged, and he doubted whether they could be persuaded to meet the enemy again. From the adversary's camp came shouts of triumph and sounds of feasting; he was passing the night in celebrating what he reckoned as a conclusive victory. Theodosius wandered away alone into the hills and remained all night in fervent prayer that God would help the right and vindicate His own cause. As the dawn came up behind the eastern hills the Emperor fell asleep and had a wonderful dream. In his dream he saw two radiant knights, clothed in white and mounted on white horses, come towards him. They told him that they were John and Philip, the Apostles of the Lord, and that he should be of good courage, for God had heard his prayers. Theodosius awoke, but only to begin praying again; nor did he cease until, just as the sun leapt up behind the Nanosberg, an officer came running to tell him of a wonderful dream that one of his soldiers had had — and

described the same vision that had visited and comforted the Emperor.

Then indeed Theodosius knew that he should prevail, but he neglected no smallest point that could aid him to victory. When all was ready he made the sign of the Cross, the preconcerted signal of attack, and hurled his men on the foe, who was somewhat dazed and disorganised after the night's excesses. Still Arbogast's men fought so fiercely that the issue seemed once more wavering in the balance, and then the great Emperor, like another David, rising in his saddle, shouted, "Where is the Lord God of Theodosius?" and dashed into the thickest of the fray. Like those other valiant ones, who carried no weapons, his soldiers said, "Let us perish with him!" and flew to follow; and then the Lord God of Theodosius let loose His servant, the terrible "Bora," the wind that science cannot account for, that blows once in a century or once in a decade, as the case may be, and always carries death on its wings. From behind the spurs of the Alps it roared down that day, as if placed under the Emperor's orders, and in its fury the very darts of Arbogast's men were turned back and buried in the bowmen's flesh.

It was a great victory, one of the decisive battles of the world, and Alaric had helped to win it, but from that day his enthusiasm for the Emperor waned. Theodosius had given him to understand that, if Eugenius and Arbogast were subdued, he should be promoted to high military office and, in time, be entrusted with the command of Roman troops in the very centre of any future line of battle; but Theodosius forgot, or trusted that Alaric had forgotten the hopes thus held out, and the proud young chief found himself still in the second rank,

a leader of auxiliaries, while the foremost honours of conflict remained with men whom his soul disdained and his intelligence discredited. There was no open rupture till after the death of Theodosius on the 17th of January, 395, little over four months after the battle of the Frigidus. The Goths had long been murmuring that they were weary of fighting the Romans' battles for them and would prefer to fight for themselves; Alaric's allegiance to the Emperor had been in great part a personal matter; the feeble boys, Arcadius and Honorius, who were now hailed as the Emperors of the East and West, had inherited none of the great attributes which the young Goth had admired and respected in their father, and were mere tools in the hands of their ministers, whose policy did not lead them to encourage or highly recompense their Barbarian allies; and so it came about that soon after St. Ambrose had pronounced his immortal funeral oration over the body of Theodosius, the Goths, camped on the fair Illyrian plain, took Alaric, placed him on a shield, and, raising it high on their shoulders, broke forth into a mighty shout echoed by all their comrades: "Theodosius! Theodosius!" "A King, a King!"

And he was a born king who stood there, smiling down on them as his graceful young figure balanced itself so lightly and easily on the upraised shield — and not only a king, but a king-maker and the first of a long line of Kings, ruling over that which was destined to be for ages the richest and most Catholic realm in Europe, the Kingdom of Spain — the true Fatherland of dead Theodosius. But Alaric's thoughts travelled not thither; when his spirit freed itself at a leap from all the practical surroundings of his life, when the veil of the present was drawn aside in dreams, and the future, vague yet glori-

ous, revealed itself for a fleeting moment to his eyes, it was Rome that they saw, insolent and mighty even in her decay, pagan at heart still, and it was he, Alaric, who was to chastise her for her sins and cleanse her from her corruption. His Arian impiety, shared with almost all his countrymen, in no way diminished his zeal for Christianity as he apprehended it, though it is hard for us to reckon as Christians the Arian detractors from the divinity of Christ. Even in our own day the Unitarians are indignant when we refuse the appellation to them — so coveted are the virtues of Christianity by those who make of Christ, the Son of God, a liar and a fraud!

So the spring of 395 saw Alaric start on a conquering career for himself, an enterprise great enough to suit his soaring ambition, and aided, all unconsciously, by the Huns, who chose the same moment for their first descent on Europe. The enfeebled empires of the East and West were appalled at the flood of devastation thus let loose and scarcely knew which foe to meet first — Alaric in Greece (whither he first turned his steps) or the Huns, who were pouring over the Caucasus and terrifying Central Europe with their hideous faces and savage war-cries. It seemed as if the last days of the world had come, and black despair breathes out of every page of the chronicles of the time. But Alaric at least had no idea of continuous fighting for mere fighting's sake; and although he did, when it suited him, permit orgies of plunder to his followers, he showed again and again the most unexpected and, as we should call it, capricious moderation, renouncing suddenly, and without apparent motive, the entire fruits of a hard-won victory. Thus, when Athens with all its riches lay, a tamed captive, to his hand, one of those strange revulsions of feeling came over him

and he made peace with its rulers, entered the city as their guest, and left it without having touched any of its treasures. Twice he stood before the Gates of Rome and twice, in obedience to the Inner Voice that had sent him there, halted at the sacred threshold and withdrew, exacting, however, a heavy indemnity to pacify his troops.

But when, in just rage at the folly of Honorius, he stood for the third time before Rome's gates, neither the promptings of the " Voice " nor the entreaties of the holy monk who had attempted to stay him and had prophesied his doom should he persist, could turn him from his resolve to take the city. And it is for the sake of my city that I have told these few scanty details of the story of Alaric. His invasion was to be the prototype of many another, but this is the first picture thrown out by the magic lantern of history showing a self-styled Christian and his horde robbing, destroying, dishonouring in the very streets of the Capital of Christianity. The Goths were given but six days (some writers say only three) in which to sate the thirst for riches and treasures which the intercourse with Rome and Constantinople had long ago aroused in their hearts. On Alaric's former visit a great part of the tribute exacted had been stipulated for in costly garments, and — of all things! — pepper, a luxury already highly prized by the Barbarians, perhaps as stimulating to their naturally noble thirst for strong drinks; this time every man helped himself, the only prohibitions proclaimed extending to holy vessels pertaining to the great sanctuaries. It is claimed for Alaric that he forbade bloodshed, but, if he did, the command was disregarded, as the contemporary lamentations of St. Jerome and St. Augustine show us there was terrible slaughter, the citizens probably attempting, at all risks,

to defend their goods and their women. St. Jerome's quiet retreat at Bethlehem was crowded with refugees, the cream of Roman aristocracy, who gave him such terrible descriptions of the downfall of the city that he was, as he tells us himself, utterly overcome with sorrow and despair. It was on learning of the ruin of the Mistress of the World that St. Augustine, once more convinced of the passing nature of earthly things, conceived the idea of writing his great work, "De Civitate Dei," showing the indestructibility of God's City of the Soul, the marvellous spiritual edifice not made with hands, of which every true Christian is co-builder and co-heir.

Alaric prided himself on his Christianity, but the sectarian hatred of many things that Catholicism reveres was so irrepressible that, as I have already related, the tombs of the martyrs were sacked whenever they were discovered, and the traces of their blessed footsteps all but obliterated in many of the Catacombs. There were, too, some of the fairest virtues of Christianity in which the Arian conquerors simply refused to believe; charity, self-denial, voluntary poverty for Christ's sake — these were such unbelievable folly in the eyes of those baptised Barbarians that they laughed at and punished them as various forms of fraud. One pitiful picture stands out from the red reek of those awful six days — that of the saintly Lady Marcella, living in her old age in her palace on the Aventine, whence every object of value had long vanished — to feed the orphan and the widow. Her only earthly treasure is one sweet girl, her adopted daughter, Principia, who repays her love with all the devotion of a young heart, and follows her example, asking nothing from life but the honour of serving Christ in His suffering poor. No slaves surround the two noble women;

their garments are mean and threadbare in the eyes of men, though they look marvellously rich to their Guardian Angels. Alone in their empty palace they two pray and weep while the roar of the sack and the shrieks of the dying sound up from the streets below. Then the invaders have sighted the fair palace on the hill; there is a rush for the entrance — every man would be the first to pick his loot from the treasures it must contain. Marcella drags Principia to a remote hiding-place — those fierce eyes only rest on youth and beauty to destroy — and returns to face the robbers, alone. The great fair-haired fellows, drunk with license, crowd round her, shouting in their uncouth tongue that she must bring forth her treasures. In vain the delicate old lady assures them that she has none, that the threadbare garments she points to are the only ones she possesses, and that the only vessels she uses are those common earthenware cups and jars in the corner, that all the rest has gone to the poor.

"It is a lie!" they cry. "A lie! You have buried your gold and silver — show us where it is!"

She calls on Heaven to witness that she has nothing, nothing but what they see, but the lust of gold has driven them mad. They seize her, throw her to the ground, and beat her with their heavy clubs till she is all but dead. Yet her heart lives. She has been praying for one thing in her torture and now she asks it of them as, weary of her obstinacy, they turn to search the dwelling for themselves:

"One thing I ask of you, and I freely forgive you all your cruelty. Leave me my daughter Principia — let me live for her sake. She is young — timid — if we are separated — if she is left desolate of my protection — she will die of despair!"

Then they believed, and they went out quietly, murmuring to one another: "The poor old creature is mad — who ever heard of voluntary poverty?" But they molested her no more. And she recovered from the effect of their blows, and soon after left Rome, taking her dear Principia with her, and they went to a far country, where they served God according to the counsels of perfection, and, when their time came, died in peace.

One other picture from those memorable days stands out — not sadly, but in an almost humorous light. Alaric, with all his Arian fierceness, had a great veneration for the Shrine of St. Peter and for the other great Churches; any one who took sanctuary in them was to be safe, and he forbade his men to touch any of the vessels pertaining to sacred worship. Now, St. Peter's was surrounded by a number of convents and other buildings connected with its service, and one morning a big Goth, unaware that he was treading on forbidden ground, walked into one of these buildings to see what he could find. He was immediately confronted by a very old nun, who boldly asked him what he was doing there? He replied that he was in search of gold and silver, that he was certain she had treasures concealed in the house, and that she must produce them at once.

"Yes," she replied meekly, "I have much silver and gold. I will show it to you." And, to the Goth's huge delight, she brought out of various hiding-places such an array of precious objects as he had never yet beheld. Silently she spread them all before him — chalices and patens of pure gold, lamps and candlesticks of bronze and silver — till he could scarcely believe his eyes and began to wonder how he could carry them all away.

Then the nun spoke. "This is all," she said. "Be-

hold these great treasures! There is no one in the house but myself, and I am an old woman, too feeble to guard them. BUT — they belong to St. Peter, and, if you lay so much as a finger on one of them, the wrath of Heaven will strike you dead!"

That was enough. The terrified warrior fled, and, rushing to Alaric, told him what he had seen. "St. Peter's treasures?" cried the chief. "They shall indeed be taken care of!" And he commanded one of his officers to lead a great body of men to the deserted house and see that the old nun and the holy vessels were deposited inside the Basilica. So that quarter of the city showed a strange sight to its inhabitants — a hundred or so of sturdy Goths, tricked out in stolen silks and gems, each carrying a bit of St. Peter's property in devout fear, as if expecting that it would blow him up; and in their midst, blinking at the sunlight, a shabby old nun, who directed their steps and issued her orders as to where everything should be placed when the frightened procession finally defiled into the great, dark Church, and halted as far as possible from the High Altar and the Tomb of the Apostle.

But St. Peter did not save Alaric. Doom was waiting for him and to doom he marched unknowingly, though I believe he would not have swerved from the path had he seen with his eyes its unsheathed sword. He had taken Rome — but Rome, devastated, famine-stricken, plague-scourged, as she was then, would have been a mere empty flare of glory in his crown, without Rome's storehouse and granary, Africa. Like England to-day, she had long outgrown any possibility of dependence on her own supplies and she had to be fed from abroad. When the African grain ships were delayed on their way, Rome

and many of her provinces went hungry; so Alaric's next move was towards Africa. He went down through the "Regno," pausing not except at Nola, the place destined long centuries after to be glorified by St. Alphonsus' pastorate. Thence he hurried, past all the riches and beauty of that teeming garden country, towards Reggio in Calabria, meaning apparently to take ship from Sicily for the opposite coast.

But he never reached Reggio; death was waiting for him at Cosenza. All we know is that it was quick, if not sudden. And then came that funeral which the world can never forget. Where two rivers meet, the greater one, the Busento, was dammed up and turned aside into its sister stream, the Crati, and in the bed thus laid bare Alaric's last bed was made. There they buried him who was born on an island at the mouth of the Danube, so that the music of rushing waters might soothe his last sleep as it had soothed his first. Great treasure they laid with him in his deep grave, and horses and weapons, that he might ride in state to meet his peers in Valhalla — for Valhalla was still Paradise for them. And they sang their great old war songs for his farewell, sounding his triumphs in his ears to the end, while the captives who had raised the dam dug it down, each man with the sweat of death on his brow, for the war songs were to be their requiem, too. When the Busento roared back to its bed and took its own old way to the sea, it carried their corpses with it, and the warriors turned away satisfied, because none could point out and none could disturb Alaric's last resting-place.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SPHINX OF FRENCH HISTORY

The Battleground of Europe—The Riddle of "The Man in the Iron Mask"—Its True Story—Louis XIV's Ambition in Italy—Plot to Secure Casale—Character of Charles, Duke of Mantua—Count Mattioli, His Favourite—Terms of the Transfer—Mission of the Count to Paris—Conclusion of the Treaty—Mattioli's Double Dealing—Ominous Delays—The Storm Breaks.

IT is a far cry, geographically speaking, from Rome to the vast, alluvial plain of Lombardo-Venezia, that most bloodstained, perhaps, of all the districts of the earth; for, if Flanders has been called the cock-pit of Europe, the immense lowlands of upper Italy may with equal justice lay claim to the title of the battlefield of the old world.

Scarcely a parish of it, from Rivoli in the west, to Aquileia in the east, but has, at one time or another — and, in many instances, not once but again and again — been deluged with the blood of armies and of individuals in public and private struggles during the course of the centuries. From Rivoli, rock-bound in the shadow of the Savoy and Alps, across to sad Aquileia, slowly decaying among its fever-stricken rice-fields by the Adriatic lagoons, shades of Masséna's Frenchmen may well look over to where their hereditary foes first poured into the southern "Mayland," as they named it under the leadership of Attila, a thousand and three hundred and forty-five years earlier; whilst, between the two, the dust of innumerable armoured condottieri and "Landsknechte" of the middle ages and the Renaissance is mingled with

that of hundreds of thousands — Latins, Teutons, Slavs, and Magyars — since fallen in this, the cloth-and-bullet age of our development from the days of Pavia to those of Solferino and Custozza.

Truly, this "Mayland" of the Gothic invaders — whence, as some hold, is derived the name of Milan — is one of the most fertile of all soils for those endowed with the gift of what Sir Thomas Browne so quaintly styled, "the art of reminiscential evocation." Its history has been made familiar to us, moreover, by many writers and painters and sculptors, all along the road of the centuries; and yet, for me, at least, the very essence of its fascination lies in some of the less known recesses of its treasure-house of human vicissitudes and human good and evil. Its towns and castles, its villas and churches, have their tales of glory or of terror, of sorrow or triumph to tell; and the story of them is the story of a people, and of a society, that have preserved their characteristics intact throughout more changes of government and of ideas than have fallen to the lot of any others in all the world, with the possible exception of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Naples.

There are in this world of ours certain spots that, on first beholding them, cause our hearts to thrill and glow with an extraordinary gladness, by reason of their perfect beauty and the exquisite harmony of them with their surroundings; until, suddenly, we learn the name of the place — and then it seems to us as though the loveliness at which we have been gazing changes under our very eyes, and, as we draw closer to it, becomes swiftly hideous

with all the loathsomeness of some dead thing first seen from afar.

Such a one was once, for Victor Hugo, on viewing it of a summer's evening from the window of a railway train, the town of Sedan, and just such another, for the wanderer who comes into sight of it for the first time, is to be found in a little old bourg at the foot of the mountains in western Lombardy, nestling among poplars and gardens, and crowned by the spire of an ancient church that rises from near the remains of a contemporary castle, once the citadel of the place.

The name of the town is Pinerolo.

The name of Pinerolo, though not so widely known as that of Sedan, is yet linked for ever with one of the most tragically famous of all personalities — that of the "Man in the Iron Mask," Hercules Anthony Mattioli, as he has now at last been proved irrefutably to have been by Monsieur Funck-Brentano in that gentleman's luminous "Legends and Archives of the Bastille," in which at one blow the writer destroys the pretensions of the several other candidates for that mournful honour.

Very few riddles, I should think, if any at all, have so constantly occupied the minds of those interested in historical curiosities during the last hundred and fifty years as has done that of the mysterious prisoner of Louis XIV; rarely, if ever, has any question been so hotly disputed by one generation and another of antiquarian scholars. But perhaps the most fascinating work on the subject is an English one, that of Mr. Tighe Hopkins,* which I would cordially recommend to all lovers of historical writings.

* Tighe Hopkins: "The Man in the Iron Mask." Hurst & Blackett, Publishers, London, 1901.

The whole episode of the "Man in the Iron Mask" furnishes as consummate an instance as any on record of the atrocious vengeance of one human being upon another; if ever Louis XIV was unworthy of his title of "the most Christian King" it was in his unmerciful cruelty towards the man who had inflicted upon him the most crushing diplomatic defeat of his whole reign, that same Count Mattioli. It was for making him ridiculous in the eyes of all who had any knowledge of the affair, by destroying his pet political scheme in regard to Italy, that King Louis condemned Mattioli to life-long imprisonment and to total separation from all that could make his existence endurable — the man's religion alone excepted. So that, for twenty-four years, from May 2, 1679, to the hour of his death, which took place about ten o'clock in the night of November 19, 1703, the unhappy Italian endured the living death of a man deprived of all knowledge of those he had loved and left behind him, and who on their side had long assumed him to be dead in very fact. Neither his wife nor his father ever learned what became of Mattioli after his disappearance on that fatal 2d of May.

The beginnings of Mattioli's tragedy were simple enough. They had their foundation, on the one hand, in the overweening ambition of Louis XIV in regard to Italy, where France had possessed Pinerolo since Cardinal Richelieu's time; and, on the other hand, in the extravagance and debauchery — and the consequent need of money — of one of the most contemptible men who ever lived: Charles of Gonzaga, fourth Duke of Mantua and the owner of the Marquisate of Montferrat, with its strong place of Casale, that lay on the Po, between forty and fifty miles east of Turin. Thus, if Casale could

only be brought within his power, the French King would be in a position to prevent any further advance of the Piedmontese into Italy by his own domination in Lombardy. It was his minister of war, the brilliant, if unscrupulous and personally immoral Louvois, who suggested to Louis in 1676 the idea of possessing himself of Casale, and so of making France the arbiter of Italian development.

Nothing could have been more to the taste of the monarch whose appetite for Italy at that time was being whetted by his naval triumph over his Dutch and Spanish adversaries off Sicily, by which he enjoyed for a space the sovereignty of the Mediterranean. The only possible difficulty in the matter was that of inducing the owner of Casale, the Duke of Mantua, to make over the control of it to King Louis — a difficulty of which the astute Louvois undertook to dispose, without fail, by means of pressure in the right place. Thus reassured, his sovereign left the management of the affair entirely in the hands of Louvois.

Louvois did not keep the King waiting long for further and most welcome news upon the subject of Casale and the Duke of Mantua. He had placed the matter, he reported, with the French representative in Venice, the Abbé D'Estrades, for investigation; and D'Estrades, an ambitious, intriguing man, only too anxious for an opportunity of distinguishing himself in the eyes of his master, had replied that he felt perfect confidence in his own ability to bring about the desired result. He was thoroughly informed, he said, of the Duke of Mantua's affairs; and, so far as these were concerned, the success of the enterprise was a foregone conclusion.

In point of fact, the Duke of Mantua was, as Mr.

Tighe Hopkins puts it, "up for sale"; his revenues, as D'Estrades reported to Louvois, were spent in advance, and he was helplessly in the hands of the Jews; there was nothing he owned that he would not be willing to sell for money to spend on his pleasures in Venice, where he lived almost habitually and whence he never returned to Mantua except upon expeditions of rack-rent. He was also much under the influence of his favourites, to whom he was accustomed to leave the governing of Mantua and the administration of his affairs; all he asked for himself was that they should leave him to his boon companions in Venice, "his gamesters, his women, and his wine-parties." And it was D'Estrades' opinion that he might best be approached in the matter of Casale through one of his favourites.

The responsibility for Duke Charles' way of life may not have lain entirely with the young man himself, then in the springtime of life; for it would seem that some of the blame should fall upon his widowed mother, Archduchess Isabella Clara of Austria, the head of his council and virtual ruler of his small domain; and Isabella Clara was as notoriously opposed to the interests of the King of France as she was favourable to those of the King of Spain, his sworn opponent in Italy. And it may even be that, in order to keep the destinies of Mantua in her own control, she rather encouraged than otherwise her son's absence from his territories in order the more easily to administer them in union with the Spanish policy — Spain being then allied with Austria against the encroachments of their rapacious Gallic neighbour.

Duke Charles, himself, according to D'Estrades in writing to Louis XIV from Venice, was endowed with "more talent and ambition than he is thought to have,"

was eager to recover for himself the authority he had let fall into his mother's hands; and, supremely, was imbued with profound suspicion of the Spaniards, who, as he believed, had every intention of making themselves masters of Montferrat and the fortress of Casale. Moreover, wrote D'Estrades, he was convinced that the duke would be willing to accept King Louis "to some extent" as his protector.

In this same letter there first occurs the name of Mattioli, whom, as D'Estrades informs the King, he has approached through a mutual acquaintance, a certain Giuliani, with the object of enlisting Mattioli's services on the French side.

For Mattioli had the ear of Duke Charles as being the one of the favourites most especially admitted to his intimacy. Mattioli was about thirty-six years old, a member of the Mantuan senate and an ex-secretary of state; a successful lawyer, and, it would appear, a boon companion of the duke's. No one fitter then, considered D'Estrades, than Mattioli to be entrusted, if possible, with the task of persuading his master to let the French take care of Casale for him against the Austrians and Spaniards, who designed to rob him of it. But Mattioli himself must first be sounded, in order that D'Estrades might be as sure of his sentiments towards France as he was of his influence over Duke Charles; hence Giuliani's mission to Verona, where Mattioli was staying, in October, 1677.

Now from this same despatch of D'Estrades' to Louis XIV it is evident that he knew Mattioli to have been already engaged in negotiations with the Spaniards in Milan — which was still, for some years, to remain their capital in Upper Italy — and to have been disappointed

by them in regard to certain hopes they had led him to entertain.

What those hopes were I do not know, because D'Estrades' despatch does not go into the details of them; but one can only suppose they must have had to do in some way with Mattioli's personal advancement or profit — which consideration seems to have weighed, at first, more with him than did that of patriotism. And, if indeed Mattioli's later conduct can be held to have been inspired by a desire to benefit his country, that conduct is at all events open by its deceitful tortuousness to the worst possible of interpretations.

And so D'Estrades's agent, Giuliani, came to seek out Mattioli at Verona, under pretence of private business, but in reality that he might win him over to the side of King Louis and so obtain his coöperation in bringing Duke Charles to the same view of his own interests. To this end Giuliani represented to Mattioli "that the friends of the duke desired greatly to see him in a position of independence; that all his territories and all his revenues were under the absolute control of his mother and the monk, Bulgarini, her confessor, and that Casale and the Montferrat were threatened by all manner of Spanish and other intrigues." *

To this Mattioli answered glibly "that he had long seen the truth" of what Giuliani had laid before him, but "there was still a remedy for so great an evil"; adding that he would speak with the duke on the subject and "discover his real sentiments."

Once thus launched, the intrigue went merrily forward. The duke was sounded in his turn by Mattioli, and answer was made through the latter to Giuliani and through

* Hopkins, p. 196 *et seq.*

D'Estrades to Louis XIV that: "The duke approved very much of the proposition that was made him, to free him from the perpetual uneasiness he felt on the score of the Spaniards, and that, for this purpose, Casale should be placed in your Majesty's hands, upon the understanding that I should try to obtain from you in his favour all that he could reasonably ask for."

Charles of Mantua's requirements were as follows:

One hundred thousand pistoles — some forty thousand pounds of English money — in cash, and that Louis should send into Italy a sufficiently strong army "to be able to undertake something considerable"; also, that he, the Duke of Mantua, should have the command of this army "in order to be considered in Italy like the late Duke of Modena, and the late Duke of Mantua, who at his age commanded in chief the Emperor's army, with the title of Vicar-General of the Empire."

With this despatch of D'Estrades' was enclosed a letter from Mattioli to Louis XIV, in which he wrote: "I bless the destiny which procures me the honour of serving so great a monarch, whom I regard and revere as a demigod." To which the King replied that he thanked the writer, and was greatly obliged to him and would have much pleasure in giving him proofs of his satisfaction upon every occasion. But King Louis did not vouchsafe any answer in the matter of terms until the reception of a further and pressing letter from D'Estrades, to the effect that the Austrians and Spaniards were making ready to size Casale and all the Montferrat; and that Mantua even was to be occupied by them. This, wrote D'Estrades, he had learned by letter from the Duke of Mantua himself, who, as D'Estrades explained, was so closely watched by Isabella Clara and Father Bulgarini

as to make it impossible for him either to declare himself openly for France or to deliver Casale to the French unless King Louis would send into Italy an army strong enough to hold that fortress.

At last, however, after much haggling over the sum to be paid to the duke as the price of Casale (he was finally beaten down to take about twelve thousand pounds, by instalments), everything was agreed to; all that remained to do was to put the agreement into writing and to sign it.

But here the first real difficulty entered into the matter; for, as D'Estrades well knew, it would be utterly impossible, during many months to come, for Louis XIV to send into Italy the soldiers upon whom the duke was relying, to enable him to hold the fortress of Casale for King Louis against his mother and her friends, the Austrians and Spaniards; because all the King's troops were too badly needed elsewhere.

The Duke of Mantua, however, who was impatient to finish the business, insisted upon sending the faithful Mattioli to Paris at this juncture, to negotiate with the King in person so as to save further delay; to this D'Estrades consented, but at the same time he cast about him for a means of retarding Mattioli's departure, lest the latter might have none but disappointing news to bring back with him from Paris to Mantua — and so the duke, impetuous and unstable, might be caught on his rebound in the hands of Spain and Austria.

Luckily for D'Estrades, one delay now succeeded to another; the necessity under which Mattioli felt himself of protecting his master against the Spanish blandishments kept him in close attendance on the duke for

months; then there followed an illness of the duchess-mother, Isabella Clara, of whose probable demise D'Estrades wrote home with the most beautiful expressions of resignation to the Divine Will: "If God should call her to Himself, the affair would be more easy to conclude." But it was fated otherwise; the honest, patriotic Austrian woman got well again. Next, it was Mattioli's own turn to fall ill; and so, from one cause and another, it resulted that he did not reach Paris until the end of November, 1678, when in a private audience with Louis XIV the matter was concluded — twelve thousand pounds were to be paid to the Duke of Mantua, to admit the French into Casale, and he was then to be appointed their commander-in-chief. Mattioli himself was given a ring and a sum of money by way of "pourboire," together with promises of the royal patronage for his son and of preferment in the Church for his brother, who was a priest. French troops under Boufflers were mobilised at Briançon on the frontier of France and Piedmont, and the great Catinat, at that time a simple brigadier, was despatched in all secrecy to Pinerolo, to await their coming.

Simultaneously, Colonel Baron D'Asfeld was sent to Venice, where the Duke of Mantua was spending the winter, there to exchange the ratification of the treaty; he arrived in the January of 1679, and at once informed Pinchesne, the French representative, of his mission. But the duke refused to ratify the treaty until Mattioli, who was still on the way from Paris, should have arrived to give him the benefit of his opinion concerning it; and here, be it noticed, is the first sign of Mattioli's double-dealing as shown in the extraordinary slowness of his journey home from Paris.

What was the reason of that slowness? — but let us wait and see.

The parts were now reversed; whereas, the French had been formerly anxious for delays, they were now all afire with eagerness to put the business through; whilst the Duke of Mantua and his Mattioli, once so impatient of any hitch in the negotiations, now seemed scarcely interested any longer in the question of Casale. Pressed by D'Asfeld and Pinchesne to promise that he would be at that place by the 20th of February at latest, the duke declined to commit himself; and when he answered them at last through Mattioli (who, on his arrival in Italy, was once more prevented for a time from attending to business by another of his inopportune attacks of illness) Duke Charles sent word to say that he could not possibly get to Casale before the 10th of March, urging three separate reasons for his inability to do so. These were: That he had not sufficient funds for such a journey; that he was unwilling to leave his heir-presumptive, Don Vincenzo Gonzaga, behind at Mantua at such a crisis; and "the obligation he found himself under of holding a sort of carousal with several Venetian gentlemen." Could anything be more frankly careless than this last; more plainly indicative of the fact that Duke Charles, disappointed by the smallness of the monetary advantage proffered him in return for the control of Casale, was either desirous of obtaining more by giving an impression of indifference in the matter, or else, that he was genuinely indifferent, by reason of the knowledge that Mattioli was even at that moment (and by preconcerted arrangement with himself) displaying the political wares so undervalued by Louis XIV to other and more

generous purchasers along the road from Paris to Venice?

And yet the French agents, at this stage of things, still reported their unshaken belief that the duke had every intention of remaining true to their master in Paris!

Meanwhile, the massing of the French troops over against the Piedmontese frontier was causing consternation throughout Northern Italy. Duke Charles even received " representations " from the Spanish and Austrian ministers at Mantua, protesting violently against the news they had heard from Turin —" that he wished to give Casale and the Montferrat to the King of France." To which the ingenuous Charles returned a flat denial, expressing some mild wonder at their excellencies' credulousness! All was now suspicion and anger, and veiled threats for Duke Charles from both sides; couriers were being sent off at top-speed to Vienna and Madrid, and even to Venice, with the news of Charles' projected " deal " with the French; whilst Pinchesne and D'Asfeld pressed him, without mercy or intermission, to betake himself to Casale, there to wait for the French troops and to hand over the keys of the place to them on their arrival. At last he agreed to do this; at the same time, D'Asfeld and Mattioli were to meet at Incréa, not far from Casale, and to exchange the ratifications of the treaty — this, I fancy, by the duke's stipulation, seeing that both Mattioli and D'Asfeld were in Venice with the treaty in their pockets. This eccentric provision seems to prove all the more clearly, in the light of subsequent events, that Duke Charles was perfectly aware of those events, and that he had no intention whatever of binding himself to Louis XIV by any signed instrument that might afterwards be held against him by that person.

The duke then was to be at Casale by the 15th of March; and Mattioli was to meet D'Asfeld at Incréa on the 9th of the same month.

And then, all at once, it was learned that D'Asfeld, marching to keep his appointment with Mattioli, had been arrested by the Spanish Government in the Duchy of Milan, which he was obliged to cross to reach the rendezvous at Incréa; on the other hand, neither Duke Charles nor Mattioli had as yet left Mantua for Casale or for Incréa — although the latter was the first to send the news of D'Asfeld's arrest to the French agents, D'Estrades at Turin and Pinchesne at Venice. It was now the end of the month of March, and those same French agents were beginning to entertain the strongest suspicions of Mattioli himself.

April passed away and still the business remained stationary, while those suspicions increased to a straining-point — and then on May Day, 1679, the storm broke.

The whole of the proposed cession of Casale was made known, simultaneously at Turin, Madrid, Vienna, Milan, and Venice; at one and the same time, the representative of each state announced his perfect knowledge of the entire transaction to Monsieur de Pomponne, the French minister for foreign affairs!

CHAPTER XIV

TRUTH OF THE IRON MASK

Mattioli's Betrayal of Louis XIV—Participation of Duke Charles—Louis' True Character Exhibited to World—Abduction of Mattioli—Imprisoned for Fifteen Years—Insanity—Story of the Mask—Mattioli's Disappearance No Mystery—Explanation of the Riddle—Mattioli's Hardships—His End.

AND so the truth came to light.

The Duchess-Regent of Savoy wrote, herself, to Louis XIV, to tell him that Mattioli had shown her the documents relating to the negotiations for Casale, and that she had in her possession copies of them. Her minister, Signor Trucci, had had an interview with Mattioli on the subject at Turin. It afterwards transpired, through Mattioli's own admission to Catinat, that he had betrayed the whole affair to the Conde de Melgar, the Spanish Governor of Milan, and that Melgar had provided him with a cipher for their communications on the subject; and that he, Mattioli, had had secret interviews in regard to it with one of the Inquisitors of State at Venice.

Personally, I find it hard to believe with Mr. Hopkins that Mattioli acted throughout without the knowledge and consent of the Duke of Mantua. In the first place, he had no certainty of any commensurate gain to be derived from his betrayal of Louis XIV to that monarch's adversaries — for responsible ministers of state do not generally pay largely for information before that information has been shown to be not merely negatively, but

positively valuable. And Mattioli would naturally have required a very large sum in each instance to compensate him for the inevitable loss of Duke Charles' favour when Duke Charles (always supposing the two men to have been working at cross purposes, and that the duke was in ignorance of Mattioli's subterranean intrigues) should discover that Mattioli had disloyally wrecked his pet project of military glory, and had kept him as well out of the enjoyment of twelve thousand pounds or so.

Again, consider the duke's own behaviour throughout — his first keenness and then his amazing apathy just at the moment when his cherished desire and a large sum of money to boot were within his reach — the "sort of carousal" put forward by him as an excuse for not going to Casale to meet the troops of which he was to have been the *generalissimo* — was such the conduct of any but a man anxious to evade the fulfilment of his bargain?

The fury of Louis XIV at being thus exhibited to the world in his true character of intriguer and brigand — and a feeble one at that — together with the explanations and personal untruths in which he now found himself involved (neither explanations nor personal untruths being at all to his proud taste) may be more easily imagined than described. Also his wrath with D'Estrades and Pinchesne for letting themselves be made fools of by Mattioli. The former of these, however, instantly took steps to assuage his master's anger by submitting a plan of revenge; he proposed that Mattioli should be kidnapped and imprisoned for so long or so short a time as the King might please.

To this Louis consented, insisting only that the thing should be done with the utmost secrecy; Mattioli was to be lured on to French soil beyond the frontier of Pied-

mont and incarcerated in a dungeon at Pinerolo. Except his gaoler there — one Saint-Mars, baptised Benignant — and Catinat, no one was to know the prisoner's name. As the offended Louis put it to D'Estrades, " Look to it that no one knows what becomes of this man." So that it was now, as Americans say, " up to " D'Estrades to carry out the abduction of Mattioli.

Oddly enough, Mattioli had not the least inkling of his peril; he had no idea that the Duchess of Savoy had made known his transaction with her to Louis XIV, and so he was all unsuspecting of the advances with which D'Estrades continued to ply him. Indeed, he was now in Turin, trying to get more money out of the French representatives, on the ground of the expenses incurred by him in promoting King Louis' interests in Italy. To that, on D'Estrades' telling him that Catinat was at Pinerolo with funds for the express purpose of reimbursing him, Mattioli agreed to meet D'Estrades early in the morning of May 2, 1679, at a spot outside the city, whence they were to drive together to a place on the frontier near Pinerolo.

Mattioli kept the appointment; D'Estrades was waiting for him at the place set, and away the carriage rolled with its burden of revenge, and treachery, and greed, along the country roads to where, at the end of some seventeen miles, Catinat was waiting for them.

And so the meeting took place and, all unwittingly, Mattioli stepped in between the very teeth of the trap set for him by D'Estrades; and at once the teeth snapped to, never again to open for the unhappy man. At two

o'clock that same afternoon, in Mr. Hopkins' words, "Saint-Mars had him under lock in the dungeon of Pignerol — the French name for Pinerolo. There, for fifteen years, Mattioli was confined under circumstances of every severity; his name was changed, officially, to Lestang, in order that none might know his identity saving only that same Benignant Saint-Mars — as timorous and heartless a creature as ever passed for a man.

In less than a year Mattioli went out of his mind, thanks to Saint-Mars' treatment of him; at that time three of the prisoners under the amiable Benignant's charge in the hell of Pinerolo were insane — Mattioli, Dubreuil, and a nameless Jacobin monk. After a while Mattioli and the Jacobin were put in the same cell — and there they lived and had their miserable being together until 1694, when, in consequence of the French reverses, preparations were set on foot to abandon Pinerolo to the Savoyards. It now became necessary to remove the only three prisoners left there to safer keeping in France itself, in order that the King's secret might be kept — the secret of his having "spirited away," by means of his agents, the Minister of a friendly Prince.

And so Mattioli was taken off, along with Dubreuil and another — the monk was dead — in a closed litter to another fortress, that of Sainte-Marguerite, on an island off the coast of Nice; his former gaoler, Saint-Mars, had, for some years already, been the governor of Sainte-Marguerite, and to him Mattioli was brought under a strong escort of soldiers by the then governor of Pinerolo, the Marquis D'Herleville, in person.

It is to be presumed that on this journey between the two prisons Mattioli was masked, as he was similarly

masked some years later, on his transference, under charge of Saint-Mars, from Sainte-Marguerite to Paris and to the Bastile itself; the mask, though, was not the traditional monstrosity of iron, but the ordinary velvet "vizard" worn to this day at masked balls.

And this brings us to one of the strangest features of the whole case — namely, that from beginning to end this secrecy on the part of Louis XIV and his henchmen was completely unnecessary, for the simple reason that the secret was no secret at all and never had been.

This is abundantly proved by the fact that, as early as 1682, little more than two years after Mattioli's abduction by D'Estrades, there was published at Cologne a pamphlet in Italian called "La prudenza trionfante di Casale." In this a complete, detailed account was given of the whole affair of the intrigue for Casale, with the full parts played in it by D'Estrades, Mattioli, the Duke of Mantua, Catinat, D'Asfeld, and Pinchesne; and in 1687 there was published at Leyden the "Histoire abrégée de l'Europe," containing a letter translated from Italian into French, denouncing the abduction of Mattioli as the outrage that it was.

How the thing came thus to light and through whom, I have no means of ascertaining, and so I must leave it to the reader to decide the question for himself. But, as the "Prudenza trionfante" contains a minute description of Mattioli's arrest, in the words, "The secretary (Mattioli) was surrounded by ten or twelve horsemen, who seized him, disguised him, *masked* him, and conducted him to Pinerolo," we can only conclude either that it must have been written by an eyewitness, or else from the description given by one of the scene in question. Moreover, there were alive, until the Eighteenth Cen-

tury, many persons of the parts about Pinerolo who continued to bear witness both to Mattioli's arrest as well as to the manner of it, especially in regard to his masking by Catinat's men.

After all, what explanation more natural than that (for the day was a Sunday) some small boys or other idlers should have followed the march of Catinat and his few soldiers, at a respectful distance, along the three miles of road from Pinerolo to the place of the arrest and, concealing themselves among the dense trees nearby, should have seen everything?

Thus, the mystery of Mattioli's disappearance from the world of the living was in no way a mystery, except in the fond imagination of his gaolers, seeing that the facts of it were public property over a great part of Europe, after the appearance of the publications mentioned in 1682 and 1687.

There arises then the question — whence the mystery of the " Man in the Iron Mask "?

From the early spring of 1694 until the summer of 1698, when Saint-Mars was promoted to be the governor of the Bastile in Paris, Mattioli remained under his care at the Island of Sainte-Marguerite. At the end of those four years Saint-Mars is told to come to Paris and to bring with him his " ancient prisoner " in such a manner that he shall be seen by no one.

And so Saint-Mars set out for his new post in the capital, taking with him his " ancient prisoner," masked as ever, in a litter, with an escort of horse-soldiers. On their way they passed by Saint-Mars' estate of Palteau, near Villeneuve in the Department of the Yonne, where Saint-Mars rested for a day or two, never letting his prisoner out of his sight; together they ate their meals,

and at night Saint-Mars slept in a bed close to that of the man in the mask.

In a letter upon the subject published in the "Année Littéraire" for June 30, 1768, and quoted in his admirable book by Mr. Tighe Hopkins, the grand-nephew of Saint-Mars, M. de Formanoir de Palteau, writes:

"In 1698, M. de Saint-Mars passed from the charge of the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite to that of the Bastile. On his way he stayed with his prisoner at Palteau. The Man in the Mask came in a litter which preceded that of M. de Saint-Mars; they were accompanied by several men on horseback. The peasants went to greet their lord; M. de Saint-Mars took his meals with his prisoner, who was placed with his back to the windows of the dining-room, which overlooked the courtyard. The peasants whom I questioned could not see whether he wore his mask while eating, but they took note of the fact that M. de Saint-Mars, who sat opposite to him, kept a pair of pistols beside his plate. They were waited on by one manservant, who fetched the dishes from the anteroom, where they were brought to him, taking care to close behind him the door of the dining-room. When the prisoner crossed the courtyard, he always wore the black mask; the peasants noticed that his teeth and lips showed through it; also that he was tall and had white hair."

These things the writer had from the few remaining actual witnesses of them, seventy years before.

On the arrival of Saint-Mars at the Bastile in the later days of September, 1698, he was met by Du Junca, the King's lieutenant of the prison, who noted the fact with all its circumstances in the register now in the library of the Arsenal in Paris. It is this entry of Du Junca's (according to M. Funck-Brentano, as quoted by Mr.

Hopkins) that is "the origin and foundation of all that has been printed on the question of the Iron Mask."

The entry goes thus:

"On Thursday, 18th of September, at three in the afternoon, M. de Saint-Mars, governor of the château of the Bastile, presented himself for the first time, coming from the government of the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite — Honorat, having with him in his litter a prisoner who was formerly in his keeping at Pignerol (Pinerolo), whom he caused to be always masked, whose name is not mentioned; on descending from the litter, he had him placed in the first chamber of the Basinière tower, waiting until night for me to take him at nine o'clock, and put him with M. de Rosarges, one of the sergeants brought by the Governor, alone in the third chamber of the Bertandière tower, which I had had furnished some days before his arrival by order of M. de Saint-Mars. The said prisoner will be served and tended by M. de Rosarges, and maintained by the Governor."

By degrees, though, poor Mattioli's importance began to decrease with years and the world's forgetfulness of the events that had so stirred France and Italy all those years before 1679; by 1701, twenty-two dreadful years after his arrest by Catinat at Pinerolo, he had fallen from his high estate of mystery, and we find him torn out of his seclusion from the common herd of malefactors, and put to share a cell with a miserable rascal imprisoned for various offences against the common law — one Tirmont, who died insane, seven years later, in the Bicêtre. And on April 30, 1701, there was added to these two yet a third prisoner, Maranville by name; the three remained together thus until the December of that year, when Tirmont was removed to Bicêtre.

The two remaining years of Mattioli's life were spent with Maranville; one can only hope the latter was able to console him a little and to soften his last moments on earth with some particle of companionship.

And now comes the last of him; as noted in Du Junca's handwriting in the prison register on November 19, 1703:

"The same day, Monday, 19th of November, 1703, the prisoner unknown, masked always with a mask of black velvet, whom M. de Saint-Mars, the governor, brought with him from the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite, and whom he had had for a long time, happening to be rather unwell yesterday on coming from Mass, died this day at about ten o'clock in the evening, without having had any serious illness; indeed, it could not have been slighter. M. Giraut, our chaplain, confessed him yesterday. Surprised by death, he did not receive the Sacraments, and our chaplain exhorted him for a moment before he died. And this unknown prisoner, confined for so long a time, was buried on Tuesday at four in the afternoon, in the cemetery of Saint Paul, our parish; on the register of burial he was given a name also unknown. M. de Rosarges, major, and Arreil, surgeon, signed the register."

At the lower left-hand side of this entry in Du Junca's prison-registry there is a note to the effect that:

"I have since learned that he was named on the register M. de Marchiel, and that the burial cost forty livres."

As a matter of fact, the entry in the registry of Saint Paul's runs as follows:

"On the 19th (November, 1703) Marchioly, aged forty-five or thereabouts, died in the Bastile, whose body

was buried in the cemetery of Saint Paul, his parish, the 20th of this month in the presence of M. Rosage (*sic*), major of the Bastile, and of M. Reglhe (*sic*), surgeon-major of the Bastile, who signed:

" Signed: Rosarges, Reilhe."

After seeing how Du Junca makes " Marcheil " where the sacristan of Saint Paul makes the name " Marchioly," it is presumable that Du Junca learned it by word of mouth from some one or other; also that the name itself had been communicated to Du Junca's informant in the same manner by Rosarges or Reilhe or the sacristan — in short, that, all along, the name was an unintentional corruption of " Mattioli." And so good-bye to his competitors, in the popular imagination, to the title of " Man in the Iron Mask," Vermandois, Monmouth, Vendôme, Fouquet, an unknown twin brother of Louis XIV, Avedick, the Armenian patriarch, General de Bulonde, and the rest. I would once more recommend to all interested in the subject Mr. Tighe Hopkins' altogether admirable publication in which he traces and destroys the claims of each and every one of these candidates to be what he so aptly terms " The Sphinx of French History."

CHAPTER XV

A "CAUSE CÉLÈBRE"

The Defrêne Case, a Drama of Crime and of Justice—The Marquis Defrêne—Marie-Elizabeth du Tillay—Elopement—Bogus Marriage—Flight to England—Marriage Made Legal—The Marquis Tires of the Marriage State—Evil Plans—Marie-Elizabeth Forewarned—Adventures of Her Flight—The "Penitent" Defrêne—Compromising Letters—The Vindication of Marie-Elizabeth—A Judicial Separation.

THE name of that same Duchess-Regent of Savoy, Maria Baptista of Nemours, the cause of Mattioli's downfall in 1679, had figured in connection with another and now long forgotten "cause célèbre" some few years earlier, in 1672 — the drama of crime and of justice known to legal annalists as the "Defrêne Case."

Towards the year 1670 there was living in Paris a young man of the name of Pierre Hennequin, Marquis Defrêne. Of his antecedents I have no knowledge, but, by all accounts, he was related to many noble and influential families; a personable young man of considerable address, and entirely given over to the fashionable life of his day as he found it — that life of license, bridled only by the fear of a death upon the scaffold; that orgy of dissipation and debt by the encouragement of which Louis XIV, as history tells us, was bent upon sapping the resources of his powerful nobles in order that he might cut their claws and impair their ability ever again to dispute the absolute authority of the throne.

As many another young man of that period, so was the Marquis Defrêne. Resolutely reckless in the gratification of every passing inclination, and the slave of his

pleasures, he was nearly at the end of his resources when, as Fate would have it, he was thrown in the path of a young and lovely girl, Marie-Elizabeth Girard du Tillay, the daughter of the President of the Chamber of Accounts. M. du Tillay, having, as a careful father, satisfied himself as to the complete undesirability of the Marquis in the character of a son-in-law, sternly repelled every attempt of the young man to gain possession of Marie-Elizabeth's affections. All M. du Tillay's efforts notwithstanding, however, Defrêne succeeded in establishing the tenderest of relations with the girl and, ultimately, in persuading her to elope with him.

But it was necessary for the Marquis to make sure of his prey as quickly as possible, lest Marie-Elizabeth's scruples and her love for the father upon whom and whose house she was now turning her back, at his invitation, should gain the upper hand of her and so make her return to her home in order to obtain the parental blessing and consent to her union with him. No priest, as Defrêne well knew, would join them in marriage without the consent of the girl's father. Marie-Elizabeth, however, was in ignorance of this fact; so that she was in no way surprised when her swain informed her that he had a priest in readiness to make them man and wife.

This priest, indeed, was no other than Defrêne's body-servant, who was to assume the sacerdotal character for the occasion; and thus between the two scoundrels, master and man, Marie-Elizabeth was deceived into going through a bogus ceremony of marriage with the blessing of the rascally valet. Having carried out this piece of villainy to the complete deception of Marie-Elizabeth, who now believed herself a marchioness for better or for worse, Defrêne hastened to put himself beyond the reach

of French law by crossing the channel into England, together with his victim, since, in those days, the protection of foreign criminals — poisoners and coiners only excepted — was considered an especial attribute of the majesty of every Sovereign.

Ere long, however, M. du Tillay contrived to trace the fugitive pair to their hiding-place. It is more than likely that he learned of it through the valet, although upon this point I cannot come at any certainty — for, at the same time, he appears to have learned the atrocious particulars of the sham marriage and to have done all in his power to bring the Marquis to justice for it. In this M. du Tillay had the powerful aid of his brother-in-law, M. Baillieu, a "Président à Mortier." But their labours were opposed by those of Defrêne's relatives, who were in terror lest the King should be persuaded, by the two eminent officials, to ask his Brother of England to make him a present of the Marquis, that he might inflict condign punishment upon him for his villainy. It ended in the issuing of a royal decree designed to satisfy both parties; by this decree the marriage was recognised as legal and binding upon both parties — in deference to the sincerity of Mademoiselle du Tillay's participation in it, its fraudulent character notwithstanding — on condition of the marriage contract's being duly signed and exchanged between the families of the bride and bridegroom. To this compromise the kindly Du Tillay gave his adhesion, and thus the evil deed of the Marquis Defrêne was righted for the time being.

But not for long; soon Defrêne, now accepted as his lawful son-in-law by Du Tillay, began to weary of the bonds of matrimony, and, disappointed in the amount of cash he had hoped to extort from his father-in-law, he

decided to try his luck afresh in some more lucrative quarter; to this end he made up his mind to get rid of poor Marie-Elizabeth, that he might be free to take another partner.

It should not have been difficult for him, one would think, in the Paris of the later Seventeenth Century, to carry out his inquitous design, without overmuch caution or expense; there were to be found there means notoriously at the disposal of gentlemen in Defrêne's predicament, provided only they were able to pay the price of a "succession powder" or of a philtre indistinguishable from the purest water save in its deadly results. And yet Defrêne could not screw up his courage, all at once, to murdering his wife out of hand or of procuring her assassination. Truth to tell, he was deterred from such a course by the salutary severity of the sentence pronounced a few years earlier, in 1667, upon the murderers of the unfortunate Marquise de Gange, who had been poisoned by her brothers-in-law with the tacit approval of her unworthy husband, the latter having been condemned to perpetual banishment with the loss of his estates and to be degraded from the nobility; while the actual assassins were sentenced to be broken alive on the wheel.

This wholesome fear, then, so acted upon the mind of the Marquis Defrêne as to compel him to devise a more subtle method of doing away with Marie-Elizabeth; a method as diabolical as any in all the dark records of criminal achievement.

His plan was, apparently, simplicity itself; he would voyage abroad with Marie-Elizabeth to Constantinople and would there sell her into slavery or the harem of some wealthy Turk; her beauty would command a substantial price that would reimburse her betrayer for the

expenses of his undertaking, and besides he could return in safety to give out that she was dead, and to claim her entire property as her disconsolate widower, her father having recently died.

Having arrived at this decision, he informed his wife that she was to accompany him on a journey that he was obliged to make to some far-distant baths for the sake of his health; and Marie-Elizabeth, ever trustful of his designs, and of his surpassing love for her, consented at once, albeit her husband did not enlighten her as to their actual destination.

From Paris they travelled to Lyons and thence to Beauvoisin. From the latter place they went over into Savoy, which they crossed in the direction of Genoa, Marie-Elizabeth being compelled to traverse the Alps, as the archives tell us, "on a vicious mule with an old pack-saddle." But from the moment of their departure from Paris a change had come over the spirit of the doomed woman; ever since then, when Defrêne had forbidden her to bid farewell to her beloved mother and her relatives, Marie-Elizabeth had been weighed down with forebodings of evil. And on reaching the seaport of Genoa these forebodings seemed to acquire the most sinister confirmation in a hint of danger conveyed to her by a good and compassionate man, Pierre Pilette, a wagoner who had acted as their guide over the passes into Italy.

This man told Marie-Elizabeth that, having gone with the Marquis (to interpret for him, presumably) to visit certain merchants of Genoa, Defrêne had made anxious inquiries for some vessel that should take him to Constantinople; further, that Defrêne had tried to obtain from them letters of credit on some merchant in that

city, but that it had not been possible for them to accommodate him, although they had cashed all such letters upon themselves as he had brought with him from France.

This information, imparted to her by Pilette, was the first Marie-Elizabeth had heard of any intention of her husband's to go to Constantinople; and, at the news, her suspicions of his conduct turned to terror that was all the more agonising by reason of the need for dissembling it in Defrêne's presence. From Genoa he now set out, with his unhappy wife and the half-dozen or so of his retainers whom he brought with him — Pilette still accompanying them to look after the horses — for Savona, where, as he had been led to expect, he might find a vessel sailing for Constantinople. Be it noted, by the way, that never since leaving Paris had any reference to the "baths," of which he had declared his health to be in need, passed Defrêne's lips; and never — save on the occasion of her interview with Pilette — had any one not a member of the Marquis' household been allowed to exchange a single word in private with his wife.

On the journey, however, to Savona, Marie-Elizabeth contrived to whisper her fears to Pilette (who, I take it, was leading her mule by the bridle along the then dangerous coast-road), imploring him to save her from her husband and to bring her into a place of safety, whence she might communicate with her relatives; and Pilette, moved by her tears and entreaties, promised that he would do his best at all costs to deliver her from her enemies. He had friends, he told her, at Savona, an inn-keeper and his wife, to whose hostel he would bring her, who would take care of her. And from their hands Pilette promised, moreover, that he would take her, afterwards,

to Turin, there to place her under the protection of the Duchess of Savoy.

Arrived at Savona, Defrêne lodged himself and his party in this inn, to which Pilette had led them; here he found a ship preparing to sail for Constantinople and so made his arrangements with her owner for the transport of himself and his wife to the Turkish capital. The day before that appointed for sailing, however, he had to go down to the wharf in order to pay over their passage money, leaving Marie-Elizabeth locked up in her bedroom. This was Pilette's opportunity; no sooner had the Marquis left the premises than he went up to Marie-Elizabeth's room, armed with a key furnished him by his friend the host, unlocked the door, and released the prisoner for whose flight he had everything in readiness.

Going down to the street with her deliverer, Marie-Elizabeth found a closed sedan-chair waiting for her, into which she stepped, and was then quickly borne away out of town into the hills, followed by the faithful Pilette. For nearly thirty miles they pursued their way northwards until, on striking the village of Cortemiglia, Pilette left his charge in the inn of the place, whilst he himself went to seek out Count Scarampo, the lord of that district, and to entrust Marie-Elizabeth to that gentleman's safe-keeping.

But, just as he was leaving the inn for that purpose, what was Pilette's consternation on beholding a party of men come tearing up the road, headed by none other than Defrêne in person, to an accompaniment of shouts and the waving of swords and firearms! Taking to his heels, the defenceless Pilette fled incontinently down the village street pursued by the Marquis and his gang with musket-shots and imprecations. Fortunately, he continued to

elude them and to make his way to the castle of Count Scarampo, to whom he gave warning of what was going forward in the village. The Count, nothing loath, at once called out his own men and rushed down to the village to do battle for the lady with her husband and his retainers; in this he was joined by the local magistrate, and so the two with their supporters reached the little inn, whence a piteous din of shrieks and blows came out into the roadway.

Having abandoned the pursuit of Pilette, Defrêne had returned hot-foot to the inn, which he had invaded in search of his wife; in spite of the host's protests, he had forced his way to where Marie-Elizabeth was cowering in a back room and had set upon her with a cudgel as well as with his fists and feet; had it not been for the timely arrival of Scarampo and the judge, moreover, there can be small doubt but that the tiger-hearted Marquis would have made an end, then and there, of the miserable woman. Providentially, though, their coming prevented this, when, seeing that resistance was useless, Defrêne submitted to their arrest of him.

For the time being, Marie-Elizabeth was safe from her husband's cruelty. Taken by Count Scarampo to his castle, she was there received by the Countess, as the chronicle relates, "with much compassion and with a distinguished politeness." Here she was rejoined by Pilette, under whose escort she set out before dawn of the next day on the road to Turin.

Such was her condition, however, as the result of the ill-treatment she had suffered, that, by evening, she had gone no further than Alba, a town on the Tanaro, where she sought out the governor and threw herself upon his protection against any further attempts on the part of her

detestable husband. The official kindly took her into his own house; but scarcely had he done so than her pursuer, having escaped from his gaolers at Cortemiglia, turned up, on foot and alone, at Alba, in his latest character — that of a penitent and broken-hearted suppliant for his wife's forgiveness. In this new rôle he presented himself before the governor, begging for an interview with Marie-Elizabeth, that he might soften her heart with the sight and the sighs of him.

To these entreaties the governor demurred for a time, but at last suffered himself to be persuaded to consent to an interview between the husband and wife on the stipulation that it should take place under his own eyes; he even went to the length of inducing Marie-Elizabeth to see Defrêne, although she herself was strongly opposed to such a concession.

When Defrêne found himself once more in her presence, he cast himself grovelling at his wife's feet, refusing to rise, with a thousand protestations, a thousand vows, of his undying love for her. He had not, he swore, the least ill-design against her in the journey he had undertaken; handing her his sword, he begged that she would either pardon him or else put him out of his sufferings. By all that was holy, he promised he would take her back to France without fail if she would but have faith in him — in short, he would be her slave in all things.

After several repetitions of this comedy, " que Baron * n'aurait si bien jouée que lui "— again I quote from the accounts of the time — the Marquis succeeded in winning over the governor to his side, and got him, in spite of Marie-Elizabeth's protests, to write to the Duke of Savoy for permission to deliver her into Defrêne's keeping, on

* Baron: The celebrated French playwright and actor (1653-1729).

condition of his taking her back to France without doing her any further injury, and of his solemnly pledging himself to answer for his good behaviour to the Duke and to the King of France.

At the same time Marie-Elizabeth wrote to the Duke and Duchess of Savoy, telling them the whole story of her husband's ill-treatment of her, and imploring their protection; this letter was intercepted by the Marquis and destroyed. Soon an answer was returned to the governor's communication, giving him the requisite permission to deliver Marie-Elizabeth into her husband's keeping on the conditions already stated, of his answering to his own Sovereign and the Duke of Savoy for his conduct towards her on the journey home. Thus the luckless woman was once more delivered into the hands of her crafty and relentless foe.

For a space all went well with her, so long as they were accompanied by an officer of the Duke of Savoy charged with seeing that Defrêne behaved himself; but no sooner were they once more by themselves than his evil designs came again to light. Having reached the village of Lanslebourg at the northern foot of the Mont Cenis, where the Savoyard officer took his leave of them, Dufrêne placed his wife under lock and key in a room in the village inn and applied himself to the problem confronting him — that of how to accomplish the destruction of his wife without rendering himself liable to the law.

And at this point it occurred to him to fall back on a stratagem of which he had already, months earlier, made a beginning, but had abandoned it through impatience and failure.

This stratagem consisted in accusing Marie-Elizabeth

of attempting to murder him by means of poison — a crime punishable with death. As he now saw clearly, the main thing needful to the success of such a method was that he should be able to produce some incontrovertible evidence, and that so atrocious, of Marie-Elizabeth's depravity as to bring her within distance of the scaffold; failing which, it must be at least such as to serve him as an excuse for his attempt to sell her into slavery.

With this amiable purpose Defrêne applied all his talents to the composing of a series of no less than twenty-four letters purporting to be written by his wife to her various lovers and couched in the most abandoned of terms. Having done this, he came with them to Marie-Elizabeth, and ordered her to copy out the vile effusions so that he might have them in her own handwriting as an irrefutable proof of her guilt against him.

For long she refused to obey his commands; until, at length, Defrêne drew a knife and threatened her with it; but even this made no impression upon her resolve to defend her honour.

"Kill me if you will — I would prefer to die rather than to write those horrible letters," she said. "All I ask is that you will let me have a priest to whom I may first confess myself — let me, at least, die like a Christian!"

To this request, it need hardly be said, Defrêne turned a deaf ear.

"Write as I tell you — or die as you are, in your sins!" he cried. "Come, be quick about it ——"

At the prospect of going into eternity in that fashion, so frightful to one of her upbringing, Marie-Elizabeth's courage broke down. Taking the pen that Defrêne held out to her, she began to copy the abominations set before

her, the tears rolling down her cheeks, her heart sick and appalled at the thing she was doing.

As she finished copying each letter, Defrêne took his own original draft of it and burned it in the fire — so that all hope seemed gone for Marie-Elizabeth of ever being able to prove her innocence of them. And, all the while, she never ceased from praying Heaven to come to her aid.

Suddenly there was a knock on the locked door of the room in which they were sitting; rising hastily, Defrêne went to the door and let himself out into the corridor, taking care to close and lock the door again behind him. Instantly Marie-Elizabeth saw her chance and took it.

It so happened that, at the moment of Defrêne's being called away, she had all but come to an end of copying one of the letters; finishing quickly she seized the draft of it in Defrêne's handwriting and slipped it between the lining of her bodice, that chanced to be torn, and the bodice itself. Then, snatching up a needle and thread, she sewed up the rent over the letter and, resuming her pen, wrote on again for dear life. Providentially, her husband was kept in conversation a considerable time. When he returned to her, she had written out yet another of the unspeakable letters, and Defrêne had lost count of the originals; so that he did not miss the one she had secreted on her person.

Finally, having completed her task, she threw down the pen and covered her face in her hands — as Defrêne triumphantly imagined in consternation at the weapon of which he was now in possession against her; in reality, for fear lest he might see the relief in her expression. For now, indeed, thanks to the letter concealed in her clothing, he was taken in his own snare!

And so it proved when, a few weeks later, the Marquis went the rounds of his acquaintance armed with Marie-Elizabeth's pretended letters to her lovers; to which she, now safe once more in her mother's house, replied by making known the circumstances under which they had been written, and by showing to all the world Defrêne's draft in his own handwriting that she had so fortunately been enabled to secrete in her dress.

The matter ended in her obtaining a judicial separation from the Marquis, who soon became involved in another and even darker iniquity — the case of Madame de Brinvilliers — through his intimacy with the truly diabolical Sainte-Croix; an intimacy that all but obtained him the public services of the executioner.

CHAPTER XVI

EUSTOCHIA

A Child of Sin—Born 1444—Her Early Peculiarities—Physical Possession by Evil Spirits—Sent to a Convent—A Life of Devotion—Eustochia a Novitiate—A Supernatural Accident—Belief that She Was a Hypocrite—Resignation—The Evil Spirit in Possession—Frightful Torments—Evil Portents—A Sorceress?—Imprisonment—Persecutions by Invisible Powers—Regaining Good Esteem—A Nun—Her Sanctity and Constancy—Her Death and Burial.

THE story of her, who was baptised by the name of Lucrezia Bellini and is now revered by the Church under that of Eustochia, which she assumed on becoming a Benedictine nun, in the year 1461, is one of the very strangest that even the Italian Quattrocento has to show. For it is the story of a child of sin who was tormented all her days by the Adversary of mankind, and who was yet a saint.

In these, our own latter days, when the world at large is recovering somewhat from the prolonged epidemic of materialism from which it had been suffering during the greater part of the Nineteenth Century, the fact of supernatural "possession" is coming to be recognised by many of the strongest scientific intellects as the only possible and rational explanation of certain among the numerous cases of mental perversity that fill our modern prisons and asylums. Even — so I have been given to understand — the "Salpêtrière" itself has been known to express opinions favourable to the theory of possession in some instances. So that the story of Eustochia may not be deemed to be unworthy of attention — even by

those persons who ordinarily find it difficult to believe anything unless it has already received the endorsement of their fellow-creatures' belief.

The natural daughter of a dissolute citizen of Terra di Gemola in the Veneto, Lucrezia was born in shame and secrecy in the year 1444, at Padua, and was sent at once to her father, Bartolomeo Bellini, at Gemola. Bartolomeo Bellini was, alas! a married man with a lawful wife and family of his own; none the less, he received the child with some show of gladness and immediately saw to her being properly baptised, giving her the name of Lucrezia; after which he handed her over to a nurse under whose care the little Lucrezia remained until she was four years old, when Bellini sent for her to come and live with him and his family in his own house. By this time she had become very pretty, as well as being already endowed with considerable charm and brightness of spirit.

On seeing her again, her father came to love Lucrezia with an especial tenderness; but, to his wife, not unnaturally, the sight of the little girl was gall and bitterness, in its reminder of her husband's infidelity to her; and the Signora Bellini soon grew to hate the presence of Lucrezia.

Nor were Bellini's own good sentiments towards his daughter suffered to endure for long.

It seemed to those with whom she was in daily and hourly contact that there was something odd about Lucrezia; for all her charm and goodness, the child, in some indefinable way, was not as other children, but rather as one mysteriously marked down by Providence for some especial purpose of Its own.

And then, suddenly, Lucrezia's peculiarities began to

take definite shape, and to manifest themselves in the most disconcerting manner by a nervous inability to control the movements of her own limbs — as it were a kind of Saint Vitus' dance. Even against her express wish, she would constantly find herself compelled to do this or that; she was even, occasionally, raised bodily by some invisible force above the ground. Her confessor declared himself of the opinion that she was under some strong preternatural influence, but of what kind, precisely, he was unable at once to determine. For, although she was frequently moved to certain movements by some will other than her own, yet her mind was entirely subject to her own control; consequently, one cannot quite think her to have yet been actually in a state of possession, her condition appearing to approximate rather to one of slight epilepsy.

But this was only the beginning of Lucrezia's long trial. In spite of her very real sufferings, her spirit maintained the calm of a constant recollection in God, together with the unceasing interior practice of the most meritorious acts of resignation and faith. As time went on, however, the fact of her physical possession by evil spirits became self-evident, and Lucrezia herself an object of the utmost aversion — nay, of fury — to her father, who refused to recognise in his child's condition the anger of Heaven upon himself for the sin of her birth.

So matters came to the point of Lucrezia's being brought to the Bishop — Monsignor Pietro Donato, I fancy — that he might exorcise the spirit that tormented her; which, as it seemed at first, he successfully did, for during some weeks after the exorcism Lucrezia was able to pursue the practice of her religion without let or hindrance; so that she was considered permanently healed.

But it was not fated to be so; her foe had only changed his tactics, and now, although still capable of constant interior acts of devotion, the hitherto gentle girl began, to the amazement of all who knew her, to show herself undocile, rough of speech, and extremely resentful of the Signora Bellini's unkindness to her. This new development, which was altogether contrary to her own inclinations, only brought upon her the increased anger and dislike of her father, who, together with his wife, proceeded to treat her so harshly as to bring her more than once to the verge of the grave. Beaten, starved, and neglected, the friendless child knew not where to find refuge from her misery save only in God, to whom she had completely given herself.

She was now seven years old, timid and crushed by suffering, but with her heart full of charity and faith; nevertheless, her father, being tempted by the father of lies, fell into the belief that Lucrezia, in revenge for his cruelty to her, was minded to poison him — and so he resolved to murder her. From this intention, however, the tempter, having no mind presumably that Lucrezia should be killed and pass in all her innocence to a better world — dissuaded Bellini, so that he changed his mind and sent her instead to the Convent of San Prosdocimo, in the city of Padua, there to finish her education.

Now, during the latter half of the Fifteenth Century, in Italy it was not unusual to find convents of religious orders in which the strict practice of the rules laid down centuries earlier for their guidance by the holy founders of those same orders had become in the course of time somewhat relaxed. The Rule — the very backbone, so to speak, of a religious community — had grown, through long, indulgent gentleness on the part of Superiors, so

mild as to be no longer suitable to the special necessities of the enclosed life; there was too much intercourse allowed with the outer world, the affairs and interests of which had come in consequence to occupy too large a part in the thoughts and natural sympathies of those called by their vocation to lead the higher spiritual existence of the cloister. And so we find that many bishops and abbots and abbesses devoted themselves particularly to the task of bringing back their "houses" to the close observance of their various original "Rules"— Franciscan, Dominican, Benedictine, and others.

The convent of San Prosdocimo belonged to the Benedictines, but, unhappily, it was one of those houses that had fallen into slackness, and into which had crept the habit of worldly conversation and of carelessness in regard to the strict observance of the regulations, imposed by their most illustrious father and founder, for the guidance of his spiritual children.

It was, then, to the care of the somewhat relaxed sisterhood of San Prosdocimo that Lucrezia was committed by her father; and, within a short time of her entry as a pupil into the convent, although the youngest of its occupants in years, she showed herself far the ripest in all goodness, the best balanced, and the most intelligent.

Of a cheerful temperament, a lively and captivating personality, Lucrezia was never frivolous or superficial; but, preserving her habitual state of recollection in calm and solitude, her life was one continual prayer. For her patrons she chose three — the Mother of God, Saint Jerome, and Saint Luke the evangelist.

Nine years the girl lived thus without being more than very slightly troubled by the evil spirit who sought her destruction; until the year 1460, when the death of the

Abbess brought about great changes in the convent. Upon that event Monsignor Zenoni, who had succeeded Monsignor Donato as Bishop of Padua, considered that the time was come to introduce a more strict administration in the convent and to revive among its inmates the spirit of Saint Benedict. With this object he forbade the nuns to elect their next Superior from among their number until the reformations that he considered necessary should have been brought about in their community. The nuns, though, dismayed by the uncompromising words "reform" and "strict observance," took fright at Monsignor Zenoni's salutary projects and transferred themselves in a body with their pupils to another house of the order.

The only one of all the convent's inmates to accept the Bishop's ordinance and to remain faithful to her post was the sixteen-year-old Lucrezia; abandoned by her superiors and companions, Lucrezia kept watch and ward alone in the deserted building until the Bishop sent over to join her a body of sisters from the convent of Santa Maria della Misericordia, appointing Donna Giustina Lazzara, a noble lady of Padua, to be their Abbess. With the coming of Donna Giustina and her companions, the primitive practice and regular observance of Saint Benedict's Rule became again the life of the house of San Prosdocimo.

Lucrezia's whole being rejoiced exceedingly in the new order of things in the convent and she determined to become, if possible, a nun and a sister in religion of those about her. When she confided her desire to them, however, she met with no encouragement; the truth was that, although they had no fault to find with her personally, yet knowing her history and that of her parents and

seeing that she had been brought up hitherto under the influence of more or less careless elders, the nuns could not help feeling rather doubtful of Lucrezia's fitness for the religious life. Her very piety they were inclined to consider merely superficial, and possibly a trifle simulated in one as yet untried by discipline. At first even Donna Giustina was drawn to this opinion; but, on reflection, she came to the conclusion that, after all, such prejudices might well constitute a grave injustice, and, remembering how Lucrezia had remained in the convent when the others had fled, she at length consented to accept her as a postulant for the stupendous honour of a bride of Christ. And so, to the dissatisfaction of her companions, Lucrezia was invested with the habit of their order, January 15, 1461; in honour of her patron, Saint Jerome, she took the name of Eustochia, the daughter of Saint Paula and the pupil of Saint Jerome. The ceremony, however, was marked for Lucrezia by an untoward incident which served to create a further unfavourable impression towards her on the part of the other nuns; for, as the priest was giving her the Communion, the Sacred Host slipped from his fingers and fell to the ground, an accident which they chose to regard as a mark of the Divine displeasure towards her.

From the day of her thus taking the veil, the real martyrdom of Eustochia began. Until then, since her entry into the convent, her sufferings at the hands of the Adversary had been comparatively light and she had been able to conceal his attacks upon her. But now his possession of her became more malignantly active, manifesting itself by controlling her movements so as to make her commit some slight exterior fault of deportment against the Rule, so that her companions, witnesses of

Eustochia's small breach of discipline, were more than ever confirmed in the opinion that she was a hypocrite. By degrees this feeling increased among them until it arrived at the point of her being shunned by them as a moral leper.

And all the while Eustochia, in exquisite, faithful humbleness, gave thanks to Heaven for Its just judgment upon her, as she deemed it, accusing herself before God and the Abbess of having brought these punishments upon herself by her sins — so that, while she lost the good opinion of those about her, she gained incessant merit in the eyes of her Creator. And now the hour of Eustochia's long darkness sounded, during which she was destined to drink to the dregs the cup of trial.

A month before the feast of Saint Jerome — that is, towards the end of August — that same year of 1461, Eustochia felt herself much perturbed and ill at ease in her heart; and her countenance, to the disquiet of the whole house, took on an expression at once sombre and menacing and quite unaccountable to the beholders, with the exception of Father Peter Salicario, the chaplain of the convent, who alone grasped the terrible meaning of it.

Father Salicario at once proceeded to prepare Eustochia for the coming assault of her foe by counselling and exhorting her; moreover, the good man straightway warned the Abbess and her nuns of the approaching storm. What effect this had upon Donna Giustina's relations with Eustochia, I do not know precisely, but the nuns themselves were, as may easily be imagined, greatly agitated by it; also, they were only the more inclined to resent the presence in their midst of one in whom the evil spirit had apparently taken up his abode. The

horror of Eustochia's proximity seemed to them unbearable, and they joined in protesting to Donna Giustina against any further continuance of it. She, however, was of a more courageous nature than they, and had perfect faith in the protection of the convent by Heaven.

The feast of Saint Jerome passed uneventfully enough (as though in unwilling tribute to his splendour and the power of his patronage), but on the next day the tempest broke loose.

We are told that it was as if a subterranean mine had been exploded in the quiet convent; and as if the Devil had entered there as an executioner with every circumstance of fear and horror. The agonised contortions of Eustochia were frightful to see as she twisted herself like a serpent in the extremity of her torments, the while her cries filled all the place with their lamentation.

The greater number of the sisters fled from the vicinity of the poor possessed, although a few attempted to watch over her at a little distance lest she should harm herself; but suddenly Eustochia, whom they had always known as the gentlest of beings, seized a knife and ran upon them, so that they also ran from her. She even pursued them until she fell over a bench, down on to which she sank, deprived for a time of all further power of movement. Father Salicario, on being sent for, summoned the evil spirit to speak; which it did as usual by the mouth of its victim, saying that it had been checked in the midst of its fury by the power of Saint Jerome and confined to the bench. Upon an attempt to exorcise it, however, it became again so violent that Eustochia had to be secured for some days lest she should do a hurt to herself or to others. During that time her torments were indescribable, her enemy doing all that he

could to make an end of her, now by strangling, now with heavy blows from an unseen hand that beat her to the ground in a half-dying condition. Not a word of impatience escaped, however, from the afflicted girl, and in the intervals of her sufferings she never failed to give thanks for them to God. Eventually, her patience and fortitude discouraged the demon, and for a space again he left her in peace. But now the bad opinion already entertained of Eustochia by the community seemed to receive the strongest confirmation from a series of unfortunate occurrences. Be it said, frankly, that the rest of the nuns were firmly convinced that Eustochia was a sorceress and that she was feigning piety as a cloak to conceal her commerce with the Prince of this world.

For all at once the Abbess fell ill of a strange malady, the nature of which it was beyond all the science of the doctors to determine. It was a kind of slow, wasting sickness without any definite features beyond the ever increasing debility of the patient; so that, as rumour soon had it in the convent, Donna Giustina was the victim of some malignant, supernatural process emanating from Eustochia, upon whom the hostile scrutiny of all about her was now directed. To make matters worse, there were found in a corner of the convent some objects — but of what nature I do not know — which in the common opinion seemed to set the seal upon this supposition. For her adversary was now compelled to resort to a new stratagem by which to encompass Eustochia's destruction.

Without listening to her protestations of her innocence, the community decided that Eustochia was guilty of the crimes that their imaginations, stimulated by the tempter, imputed to her; she was imprisoned in a dark cell far from

those of her sisters, and there began to be talk of her being hanged for sacrilege and magic and — should the Abbess die — for murder as well! Soon the town of Padua was all agog with the news that the seemingly pious Eustochia was imprisoned on these charges and the people flocked about the gates of the convent clamouring for her to be delivered to them that they might burn her at the stake and purify their city of her being.

And, all the while, Eustochia sat alone in the dark and narrow cell with only her enemy, as it seemed to her, for company, despised and hated and abandoned of all living things; tortured in body and mind, her days and nights were spent in unutterable desolation, while, as she afterwards related, her soul was unceasingly attacked by the evil spirit with every imaginable temptation to impurity and despair. And yet, in spite of all, she could say with Abraham that she had hoped against hope. The very solitude and silence of her prison provided her with the opportunity she so needed of satisfying her supreme desire for prayer. No books were allowed her, but she found consolation in reciting over and over again such psalms as she knew by heart. She had taught herself the five canticles of which the first letters form the name of Mary — *Magnificat, Ad Dominum, Retribue servo tuo, Judica me, Deus, Ad te levavi* — to each of which she added an anthem formed from the same letters — *Missus est, Assumpta est, Rubum, In odorem, Ave Maria,* ending with the *Interveniat.* Thus Eustochia in her gloomy prison was as a lonely dove in its nest, weeping and sighing, not with impatience, but with Divine love, unceasingly tempted by the Devil and as unceasingly defeating him by her sweetness.

At long length her confessor obtained access to Eusto-

chia; whereupon the demon to whom power was permitted over her body spoke by her lips and lyingly confessed that she had been guilty of the crimes attributed to her. This took place in the presence of several of the nuns who were present at Father Salicario's interview with her; the priest was thunderstruck and embarrassed by this admission on Eustochia's part, but, being persuaded of the diabolical influence at work in the matter, he obtained leave to speak with her again on the next day. This time he began the interview with an exorcism, as the result of which Eustochia was enabled to speak of her own accord and to tell him what was truly in her heart that was so filled with humility and charity as to flow over with them.

So strengthened was Salicario in his championship of the girl that he bent all his efforts to proving her innocence; moreover, the Abbess, who was now recovering from her indisposition, was equally inclined to a generous view of the case. Her desire was to get rid of Eustochia from the convent, in the kindest manner possible, in order to spare it all further disorder and scandalous notoriety by reason of having the afflicted novice any longer beneath its roof. With this object, Donna Giustina persuaded her brother, Don Francesco Lazzara, to see Eustochia and to try to induce her to withdraw from the convent of San Prosdocimo; with which request Don Francesco, a man of rare integrity and uprightness, complied and sought out the possessed in her narrow cell.

Here, alone with Eustochia, he put the case ably and kindly to her, urging her to leave the convent — in which, as it appeared to him, it was not the will of Heaven that she should remain — and to return to the world out-

side it, where he promised he would undertake to provide for her and even to find her a good husband. Since she was not yet tied to the life of a religious by any vows, he concluded, she need have no hesitation in adopting a course which was not only permitted by the Church, but also, indeed, absolutely necessary.

Eustochia heard him out in silence. Then, having thanked him for his kindness to her, she replied:

"Do not believe that I am as unhappy as the world seems to think"— for in his argument Don Francesco had spoken of what must be her utter misery, both from the demon that had her frame in thrall and from the hostility towards her of the nuns themselves, for whom her presence was an affliction. "My sufferings are for me only the caresses of my Celestial Spouse, who permits the wicked spirit to chastise me, and I am so happy in them that I would not exchange them against all the delights of the world. Let them continue, or even increase, they do not disturb me. In calling me to the life of the cloister, God did not call me to an existence of tranquillity and ease. If I find my path strewn with thorns, it is a sign that that is the path by which He wishes to lead me to Him — for it is the same path that was trodden by Jesus Christ. My sisters here in the convent look upon me, I know, as an outcast; it hurts me, and I have no one but myself to blame for it, for I am full of faults. Still, I hope to correct myself in time of my faults, and so to merit a better opinion from my sisters. I know, too, that I am a burden on the convent, and that the demon who has possession of me is an object of horror to the whole community; but as I am becoming accustomed to his persecution of me, so will they get over their terror of him. For the rest, as my deliverance from him is not in my own

hands, I can only entreat them to have compassion upon me."

On hearing these words, Don Francesco was amazed by the courage and patience of Eustochia; completely won over by them to the side of the gentle speaker, he could find no words sufficient to praise her constancy or to express his enthusiastic approval of her resolution to cleave to her vocation. All he suggested was that she should change her convent for another; but this she declined to do.

This interview with Don Francesco resulted, ultimately, in some little amelioration of Eustochia's existence; the Abbess now taking her part against the rest of the community, she was permitted to leave the cell (in which she had been confined some three months by order of the higher authorities) for the infirmary, where she was to help in tending the sick. She was forbidden, however, to appear either in choir or in church during the hours of service, or to show herself in the parlour, or to have any relations of any kind with the outside world — and, most especially, she was not to speak to any one, whosoever, of her sufferings from the demon. And when she met any of the sisters, they showed their detestation of Eustochia by lowering their eyes or turning their backs on her; nobody who could help it came near her, nobody spoke to her; for to one and all — the chaplain and the Abbess only excepted — she was an object of horror and of aversion.

Through all these trials nothing had been more painful to Eustochia than the knowledge that the sisters sometimes believed her to be only feigning possession in order to obtain their sympathy and commiseration. But, at this point, it seemed as though the evil spirit himself was

determined to change their mind in respect to the reality of his presence among them by redoubling the fury of his onslaught upon Eustochia; thenceforth invisible hands daily inflicted upon her the most barbarous violence, maltreating her in a thousand ways, so as often to bring her within a short distance of expiring from the effects of it. At times it was as if he had scourged her with whips of metal; while, at others, it seemed as though her body had been slashed with knives. At times, again, Eustochia was dragged along the ground to the door of the convent as if her foe were bent upon casting her out from it into the street; and then she would be lifted up by an unseen power into the air, and let to fall, senseless and head downward, upon the stone floor with a crash — so that all wondered how it was that she escaped without a fractured skull. Again and again a deep puncture was made by the same unseen agency in the side of her neck, causing an extensive flow of blood; and once she was carried up on to the tiles of the convent roof by the invisible power and held suspended in the abyss over the street below, in the sight of the whole community, that cried aloud upon Heaven to protect her. And not until the chaplain came, to command the evil spirit that it should bring Eustochia down immediately without hurting her, was she restored in safety to her sisters, who by this time were completely cured of their former disbelief.

But of all these manifestations of unearthly violence towards Eustochia, perhaps the most remarkable was one that occurred in the presence of her confessor, that same Father Salicario, who afterwards bore testimony of it. One day, as he was conversing with her, a large kitchen knife, lying on a table nearby, rose up suddenly of itself and struck Eustochia upon her breast, transfixing her habit

over which the blood ran out in streams, the while a voice cried:

"If you do not give yourself to me, I will enlarge the wound until your heart is visible!"

"So much the better," gasped Eustochia, as she staggered to the table and leaned upon it for support. "For, if you do, you will first have to write the holy name of Jesus upon my breast. . . ."

Which thing Father Salicario laid it upon the evil spirit that it should do according as Eustochia had said; and a few years later, when they were preparing her dead body for its resting-place, the nuns, to their delight and great wonder, found the Holy Name cut deep into the flesh over the region of Eustochia's loving heart.

After four years of her terrible novitiate, during which she had never ceased, in spite of all their unconcealed antipathy with its constant slights and affronts, to love her sister nuns and to venerate them as her betters, Eustochia was now, at length, conquering their dislike of her and acquiring even something of their esteem by the sublime perfection of her bearing. Of this improvement in their feelings towards her they gave proof in admitting Eustochia to the number of professed nuns on March 25, 1465, for which favour she was more than grateful. On that day, therefore, she made her first vows, kneeling before Donna Giustina in the chapel and having in her hands the written formula which, signed by Eustochia herself, is sacredly preserved among the treasures of her order.

From that day forth Eustochia gave herself up entirely to prayer and meditation, neither appearing in the parlour nor even speaking to any of the sisters, except only when

absolutely necessary. And the demon never ceased from tormenting her daily and in many ways; but without being able to disturb the heavenly serenity of her.

Thus Eustochia entered upon her twenty-third year, and the time was come (in accordance with the custom in convents of those days) for her to make her final vows and to take the veil. This she did at the hands of the chaplain — being confined by her extreme, increasing weakness to her bed — on September 14, 1467, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. At this time the community, now so altered in its sentiments towards Eustochia, was in fear of soon losing her from its midst, so exhausted and emaciated was she in consequence of her persecution by the spirit that possessed her; but, to the general astonishment, she proceeded to recover rapidly and, a week after her reception of the veil almost "in articulo mortis," Eustochia was once more well enough to go to church and there to repeat her vows in public.

From being despised and shunned by all as a sorceress and supposed murderess, an object of horror and suspicion not only to the inmates of the convent but to the townspeople of Padua as well, Eustochia was now the glory of her convent and the model of her sisters in it; the whole town joined them in extolling her constancy in affliction and in doing honour to her sanctity.

So much for the judgments of this world!

As for Eustochia herself, she remained the same through good and evil report. From her cell where she passed her time there floated out now and again a burst of golden song in praise of God, so tender and sweet as to ravish the hearts of those that heard her; on these occasions the other nuns thought of her rather as an angel than a human being. It was during this last phase

of her life that there was celebrated at Venice the marriage of Caterina Cornaro with James, the King of Cyprus. The report of the splendours in connection with this wedding was brought to Padua, where for many days there was talk of little else. But " I would not exchange my pains and dolours against all the pomp of them," remarked Eustochia quietly. To such a point of virtue had she attained that she was only afraid lest Heaven should order the Devil to leave her in peace — and so she might be in danger of losing her humility. At this time she ate only once a day, and on two days of each week abstained altogether from food of any kind.

Towards the end the Demon, despairing almost of her, turned his activities to Father Salicario, whom he contrived to inspire with the strongest personal dislike for Eustochia. This design, however, of separating her from the kind friend of whose services she felt herself to be hourly more in need, Eustochia defeated by means of commending her need to the Mother of God and of reciting a hundred times the " Ave Maria," the result of which was always to bring the chaplain to her. As Father Salicario afterward testified to many, he felt himself compelled by an irresistible force to go to her at such times, his own disinclination notwithstanding.

It was not until eleven days before Eustochia's death, at the feast of the Purification, that the evil spirit seemed to have been commanded to desist from doing bodily violence upon her; and now he redoubled his efforts to gain possession of her soul. A week before she died she received the last Sacraments, which were administered to her in church — to the general astonishment — in view of her feeble condition. Having returned to her bed of pain,

Eustochia became absorbed in heavenly contemplation; when, all at once, she was attacked by a legion of hateful fancies, and there passed before her dying eyes a train of spectral revellings — from dances, feastings, and wedding banquets to other and darker things such as she had never given a thought to in the days of her youth and health. All she told to her friend, a certain Sister Euphrasia, remarking how the human soul is liable to such sensual temptations even on the brink of the grave, adding her conviction that God does not abandon His creatures in their supreme struggle.

And so the hour of her death — which she had foretold — drew nigh for Eustochia. On the day — a Sunday — before that appointed from the beginning of all time for her departure out of this life, Eustochia made her confession and received absolution for the last time; then, begging Euphrasia to keep watch with her in the Valley of the Shadow, the little servant of God waited patiently for the end.

The last night of Eustochia's life, that of Sunday, February 12-13, 1469, drew on during some hours in utter stillness for Euphrasia, as she sat beside the bed in the dimly lit cell. Suddenly, towards morning, she became conscious of a disquieting, stealthy sound, as of a man climbing up the outer wall of the convent towards the roof — an altogether unbelievable sound to Euphrasia's ears, considering the physical impossibility of such a thing. Nevertheless, as she listened, incredulous yet affrighted, the slow dragging of hands and feet over the smooth surface of the wall was distinctly audible to her; until, at last, the noises passed away into the silence overhead, and all was quiet once more, save for the laboured breathing of the form on the bed.

And then Euphrasia's eyes fell to the face of Eustochia, who was sleeping, and she saw that it was smiling, and all luminous with a kind of unearthly brightness; so she understood that what she had heard was the departure of the evil spirit from the body of her whom he had been permitted for so long to torment. These sounds were audible to all in the convent, by whom, and by Father Salicario, they were held to be those of the demon's reluctant flight.

In the morning, the Abbess with her nuns came, at her request, to say farewell to Eustochia, kneeling about the bed in prayer for her, the while she thanked them, as she expressed it, "for all your long-suffering and patience with me." After which she still found strength to ask their "pardon for all the bad examples I have given you and all the inconvenience and embarrassment of having me among you."

Then, having bidden them "*Arrivederci in Cielo,*" so affectionately as to wring the hearts of all who heard her, Eustochia, folding her hands upon her breast, fell asleep with a smile. Nor was it until some time had elapsed that they could bring themselves to believe that she was really dead.

When Eustochia was laid out in the chapel, all the town flocked to do honour to the body, which, as we are told, exhaled a very sweet and noticeable fragrance. She was first buried in the cloister of the convent, where her remains were disinterred on November 16, 1472, in the presence of many witnesses, who testified to it that the body was still precisely as it had been in the moment of her death, perfectly incorrupt and supple and deliciously fragrant. In 1475, however, the coffin was transferred to the church and a marble monument raised above her

resting-place; meanwhile, as though to mark the spot formerly hallowed by being the depository of Eustochia's body, a spring of purest water burst up out of her first grave in the cloister; which spring became a famous resort for the sick, of whom multitudes recovered their health by drinking of it.

CHAPTER XVII

A SKETCH OF VERONA

Personality of Italian Towns—Verona—Its History—Early Years—Ezzelino da Romano, Unique in Cruelty—Wholesale Execution and Imprisonment—Pope Alexander IV Assails the Monster—Ezzelino Wounded and Captured—Suicide—New Line of Despots—Cangrande della Scala—Dante and Petrarch—Further Lords of Verona—Later History—The Drei Kaiser Bund.

ALMOST every ancient Italian town possesses some distinctive attribute of its own, whether of pure beauty or grandeur or sanctity; or, else, of mere gentle charm, gladsome or melancholy, such as Sorrento or Ravenna; but of them all perhaps the most richly endowed — Rome itself alone excepted — with stirring memories of the men and their deeds, good and bad, of bygone ages, is the city of Verona.

One of the earliest — and very possibly, too, one of the best — representations of Verona is to my mind that visible in the background of the painting of the deposition of our Saviour from the cross, by Paolo Morando, better known as Cavazzola. In that picture the artist gives us a wonderfully vivid impression of his native town, as a pile of old masonry incasing a hill that rises up from the bank of a river — the Adige — against the cold clear sky of an evening of spring. This picture was painted about 1520, a few years after the restoration of Verona to the Venetian Government by Francis I of France, after wresting it from the Emperor of Germany, Maximilian of Hapsburg. Thenceforth its history was

comparatively uneventful, that of an appanage of Venice, until the Napoleonic era, when the French took the town, afterwards sharing it for a space with the Austrians, 1798-1800. From then on the allegiance of Verona was claimed — and enacted — in turn by France and Austria until it became part of the King of Sardinia's territories after the peace of Nikolsburg in 1866.

But it is in the history of Verona's earlier days that we find her greatest glories side by side with her greatest suffering, from the nightmare of the attempt upon her sovereignty by Ezzelino da Romano to the "Golden Age" of the Scaligeri.

Ezzelino, hereditary lord of Bassano, was one of the leaders of the party of the Ghibellines against the Guelphs, and a supporter of the Hohenstaufens in their unavailing contest for the supremacy in Italy. Never has any human being earned so dark a character for cruelty as Ezzelino; never, until our own day, in which (1906) the "Viedomosti" of Moscow suggested the massacre of a million people as the means of quieting the Russian revolution, has any one aspired to rival Ezzelino's record as a slayer of unarmed people. Beside this man, such small fry as Cromwell, Gilles de Retz, and their kind sink into insignificance. The Florentine historian, Villani, describes Ezzelino as "the cruelest and most terrific tyrant that ever existed among Christians. By his might and tyranny he lorded it for a long time over the March of Treviso and the town of Padua and a great part of Lombardy. He made away with a fearful part of the citizens of Padua, and blinded a great number, even of the best and noblest among them, taking away their possessions and sending them adrift to beg through the world. And many others by divers torments and mar-

tyrdoms he put to death, and in one hour caused eleven thousand Paduans to be burnt."

Ezzelino's principal opponent in the city of Verona and the surrounding country was the family of San Bonifacio, who headed the party of the Guelphs. In truth, Ezzelino himself would appear to have been simply a madman, hæmatomaniac; although, at the same time, he showed energy, resolution, and shrewdness altogether beyond the ordinary, so that the Emperor Frederick made him his Vicar in the north of Italy. One city after another found itself compelled to submit to Ezzelino; Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Feltre, and Belluno, together with many other small towns and strong places, succumbed to him. A small, wiry man and pale, with hair, as we are told by a contemporary, "between the white and the red," Ezzelino's very look is said to have struck terror into the majority of those who beheld him. The only good deed recorded of him was his interfering to put a stop to the sack of Vicenza in 1236, when, in company with his master, the Emperor, he wrested the city from the Guelphs. Ezzelino's object in doing this seems to have been less one, however, of humanity than that of acquiring for himself the gratitude of the citizens whom he intended to make ultimately his own subjects. As an instance of the discipline maintained by him, it is told that, on this occasion, on finding his orders disobeyed by a captain of German "Landsknechts," he cut the man down on the spot, so that the rest of the soldiery were awed into good behaviour. No sooner, however, had they departed from it than Ezzelino, as the Imperial Commissary of the town, proceeded to set up a special tribunal on his own account, by means of which he speedily put to death some two thousand citi-

zens of Padua that he found there, in revenge for the action of their native city in having declared against him a short while previously. Here, too, as also at Verona, many nobles were burned in the public square, after having been dragged for miles at a horse's tail.

It was not until the following year — 1237 — that Ezzelino succeeded in reducing Padua itself to submission. The Paduans he hated even more venomously than he hated the rest of mankind, because of their long resistance to him; for Padua, the City of Saint Anthony, had all along been a stronghold of the Guelph party; that is to say, of the Church, in her struggle for civilisation and humanity, against the Emperor and his barons who were opposed to any lessening of their power by the erection of popular institutions. The wars between the Guelphs and their opponents, the Ghibellines, began in the Eleventh Century and lasted for some four hundred years; during which period innumerable despots ruled over various cities and districts in Italy, putting to death countless thousands of their fellow-creatures and, very frequently, meeting their own end at the hand of murderers either by dagger or poison. And, of them all, Ezzelino was the most universally execrated by reason of his monstrous cruelty.

On this occasion of his capturing Padua, therefore, Ezzelino indulged his love of bloodshed without stint. It was on this occasion that nearly eleven thousand — ten thousand and eight hundred, to be exact — Paduan soldiers were burned by his orders. The chronicler says that they were burned "in an hour"; but that is obviously impossible. I doubt whether Ezzelino, in those earlier stages of his career, ever had more than from twenty to twenty-eight thousand men under his command

at once; and so it is probable that the executions were continued during a number of days or, even, of weeks. At the same time he built no less than eight prisons in Padua, two of which held each three hundred prisoners; and albeit the executioners were never idle, yet those prisons were always kept full.

It is said that thousands perished in these and similar dungeons of Ezzelino at Verona, Vicenza, and Cittadella. The prisoners included young boys and girls, and also little children, with whom were huddled grown men and women of all ages and conditions; many died from want of air, and many went mad and attacked their miserable companions. And whenever any one died in prison, his or her body was left there to rot among the living until the next cleaning of the prison — which only took place at regular intervals of three months.

One of Ezzelino's most detestable exploits was achieved on his capture of Friola, when he caused the entire population to have their eyes put out, and their noses and legs cut off, and then to be thrown out beyond the town in still living heaps of bodies.

And once he came nearly to a premature end, when one of the House of Monticoli, whom he had insulted, sprang upon him and so tore his face and neck with teeth and nails that Ezzelino bore the marks of them for the rest of his days; so frightful, too, were the tortures inflicted by Ezzelino upon his victims that one of them once — a certain man — fearing lest his sufferings might make him betray his friends, bit out his tongue and spat it into the face of Ezzelino, who was watching him being fastened to the rack. His own father-in-law, the father of his third wife, Beatrice Maltraversi — of the same house, I take it, as the English family of

Maltravers — he had thrown into prison and starved to death.

In the year 1255, however, Pope Alexander IV issued Letters of Crusade against the monster — Ezzelino had already long before been laid under the ban of Major Excommunication — and gave the Papal Benediction to all who joined themselves to the forces preparing to deal with that enemy of the human race. The Archbishop of Ravenna was appointed to the chief command and he was soon joined by the troops of Venice and of Este. But the victory was not to be an easy one; for three whole years the contending forces wrestled with each other in Lombardy and Venetia, until Ezzelino was at last defeated and captured, on September 16, 1259, in a battle on the banks of the Adda. Thence he was taken, desperately wounded, to the castle of Soncino for safekeeping, with the intention of bringing him to trial for his enormities; a design frustrated by Ezzelino himself, a few days later, when, in a fit of rage and despair, he tore the bandages from his wounds and so bled to death.

The downfall of Ezzelino it was that ushered in the advent of a nobler race of despots — the Scaligeri — in the person of Mastino della Scala, who was elected Chief Magistrate of Verona by the people on learning the glad news of Ezzelino's death; and, in 1262, they chose him to be " Chief of the People." Mastino was a Ghibelline, however, and his popularity could not endure for ever among a populace that had already suffered so much from its subjection to that party. On October 26, 1277, Mastino was stabbed, together with his friend Antonio Nogarola, near his own house; and to him succeeded his brother Alberto, who was the first of the Scaligeri to place the family on a semi-royal footing by means of his

conquests and the matrimonial alliances arranged by him for his two eldest sons, Bartolomeo and Alboino. It was the youngest, however, of the nephews of the murdered Mastino, Cangrande della Scala, who was to prove himself the greatest of them all. On the death of Bartolomeo, the eldest of the brothers, Alboino assumed the reins of government in Verona, and called in Cangrande to assist him.

Cangrande —"The Great Dog"— was the very "beau-ideal" of a despot; as splendid in his person and mind as in his disposition and his victories, his is one of the most striking figures of the Middle Ages. As Boccaccio says of him, he was "one of the most noted and magnificent lords known in Italy since the time of Frederick II," and the Guelph historian Villani styles him "the greatest tyrant and the richest and most powerful prince that has been in Lombardy since Ezzelino da Romano"; whilst Petrarch styles Cangrande "the consoler of the houseless and the afflicted," in commemoration of Cangrande's kindness to Dante when the latter was exiled from Florence, as well as of the hospitable treatment accorded to other unfortunates by the generosity of "The Dog." Among these guests of Cangrande were included many of his prisoners of war, such as Giacomo da Carraraam and Albertino da Mussato, whom he treated with all the courtesy and consideration shown by him to his voluntary guests, such as Dante himself and Spinetta Malaspina.

In spite, however, of Dante's very real gratitude to Cangrande, there grew up a coldness between them which seems to have been mainly brought about by Dante's unsociable and critical temperament. It was no less experienced a judge of men and of the society of his time than

Petrarch who writes of Dante and his relations with Cangrande:

"When banished from his country he (Dante) resided at the court of Cangrande, where the afflicted universally found consolation and an asylum. He was at first held in much honour by the Dog (dal Cane), but afterwards he by degrees fell out of favour, and day by day pleased less that lord. Actors and parasites of every description used to be collected together at the same banquet; one of these, most impudent in his words and in his obscene gestures, obtained much importance and favour with many. The Dog, suspecting that Dante disliked this, called the man before him, and, having greatly praised him to our poet, said: 'I wonder how it is that this silly fellow should know how to please all, and that thou canst not, who art said to be so wise.' Dante answered: 'Thou wouldst not wonder if thou knewest that friendship is founded on similarity of habits and disposition.' It is also related that at his table, which was indiscriminately hospitable, where buffoons sat down with Dante, and where jests passed which must have been repulsive to every person of refinement, but disgraceful when uttered by the superior in rank to his inferior, a boy was once concealed under the table, who, collecting the bones that were thrown there by the guests, according to the custom of those times, heaped them up at Dante's feet. When the tables were removed, the great heap appearing, the Dog pretended to show great astonishment and said, "Certainly Dante is a great devourer of meat.' To which Dante readily replied, 'My Lord, if *I* were the Dog, you would not see so many bones'—'Se fosse io il Can non si vedrebbe tante osse,'—meaning that, if he had been Cangrande, he would have had fewer and choicer companions at his table.

"From the strength and glory of his position in Lombardy, Cangrande would appear to have been designated by Dante as the one man fitted to unite the entire peninsula of Italy under his own rule. This belief of Dante's,

according to many of his commentators, is expressed in what has become known as the ' Veltro prophecy ' in the first Canto of the ' Inferno,' the passage where the poet, finding his way barred by the leopard —' quella fera alla gaietta pelle,'— is saved from it by the shade of Virgil, who explains to him the pure character of the heart which, as he says, ' is but the hungrier after banqueting.'

" And then the shade continues:

" ' Many are the animals with which this beast doth mate, and there shall yet be others still, until the greyhound comes that is to make the beast die painfully. He (the greyhound) shall not feed on land or gold, but on wisdom and virtue and love. And his country shall lie between Feltro and Feltro; and he shall be the saviour of this lowly Italy.'

" And again, at perhaps the most disputed passage of the entire ' Divina Commedia ' (Purgatorio, Canto XXXIII, line 46), Dante speaks of a mysterious personage who is to do great things and of whom he speaks as ' A five hundred and ten and five sent by God '—' Un cinquecento diece e cinque, messo di Dio '— which numerals, as is held by many, have reference to no other than Cangrande himself, and that the DXV of these numerals and the ' Veltro ' of the former prophecy are only meant to signify one and the same person — the lord of Verona.

" And, in fact, Cangrande became in 1313, on the death of Emperor Henry of Luxembourg, the natural leader of the Ghibellines and the mainstay of their hopes in Italy — for his was an united and a single authority in his dominions, whereas the rule of the Visconti in Milan — the other great Ghibelline centre — was as yet but feeble by comparison and very uncertain. From then until his death Cangrande devoted himself to furthering his pet project of a federation of Italian States under his own leadership — but without success. He came to his end at the untimely age of thirty-eight, July 22, 1329, as the effect, according to Mr. Ruskin, of ' eating apples when he was too hot.' By then Cangrande had compelled

nine other cities besides Verona to pay yearly tribute to him as their sovereign lord — Padua, Vicenza, Treviso, Brescia, Feltre, Belluno, Parma, Modena, and Lucca — their collected addition to his revenues being, as Villani said, 'more than 70,000 florins of gold, which no other Christian King possesses, unless it be the King of France.'"

After Cangrande's demise, however, the lordship of his dominions fell into very different hands. He was succeeded by his two nephews, Mastino and Alberto, of whom the elder was devoured by an insatiable ambition to extend his lordship still further and to make of it an independent kingdom and the arbiter of Italian destinies; whilst the younger, Alberto, was merely a man of pleasure. Thus it came about that before long Mastino had engaged his people in disputes with the republics of Florence and Venice and the clans of Este, Visconti, and Gonzaga; Alberto, as his subscription to the general ill-will, having at the same time inflicted an outrageous wrong upon the great Paduan house of Carrara in the person of one of its women. So that the Scaligeri had to contend with external foes and with rebellion as well. By the end of 1339, ten years after Cangrande's death, their dominions had been reduced to the two cities of Verona and Vicenza; moreover, Mastino had been excommunicated for killing his uncle's kinsman, Bishop Bartolomeo della Scala, in anger at some remonstrance on the prelate's part. His repentance, though, was sincere and lasting; for it is said of him that, after the crime, he never again suffered any living being to look upon his face, not even allowing his wife, Taddea de Carrara, a relative of the lady injured by Alberto, to behold it. Mrs. Wiel, in her brilliant history of Verona, to which famous

work I would fain express my immense obligation, is of the opinion that this tradition may well owe its origin to the fact that the armoured equestrian statue of Mastino, over his tomb in Verona, is represented with the vizor down, as indicating Mastino's desire to conceal his features permanently from sight.

But from now on, for more than forty years, murder plays almost the chief part in the chronicle of the Scaligeri. After Mastino came his son, Cangrande II, who was murdered by his younger brother, Cansignorio, aged twenty, with his own hand on December 14, 1359. Soon after, Cansignorio was proclaimed, together with his own younger brother Alboino, lord of Verona, but soon Cansignorio exiled Alboino to Peschiera, because he was afraid of the youth's popularity with the citizens. Years went by whilst Alboino lay in exile at Peschiera; during which years two natural sons, Bartolomeo and Antonio, were born to Cansignorio in Verona. Cansignorio, however, was not fated to live long, for death came to seek him out in his thirty-sixth year, but he knew of its certain coming some time beforehand, and faced it resignedly. But, even while he was dying, the news was circulated in the streets of Verona that his brother Alboino had suddenly died at Peschiera — of poison, as the people declared, in order that he might not succeed to the lordship that Cansignorio had destined for his own illegitimate sons. But then every death of which the cause was not quite plain was ascribed to poison in those days, so that it seems only charitable to believe that public opinion may have been at fault in its verdict upon the death of Alboino della Scala.

Cansignorio himself died on October 19, 1375, and his sons, Bartolomeo and Antonio, reigned for a while

together in his stead. But Antonio was infected with ambition to be the sole ruler of Verona; moreover, he was jealous of the love which all who knew him bore toward Bartolomeo.

Now it chanced that the latter, in the month of July, 1381, was courting a beautiful daughter of the family of Nogarola, whose dwelling stands in the street of " the two Moors," not far from the palace of the Scaligeri. Bartolomeo, though, was not her only suitor, for he had a rival in the person of a cadet of the house of Malaspina. And Antonio, seeing how the thing was, resolved to make use of this situation to rid himself of Bartolomeo and to reign alone in Verona. Accordingly, on the evening of July 12, 1381, he hired a number of " bravi," or professional assassins, and concealed them in Bartolomeo's apartments in the Palazzo Scaligeri. Later on, Bartolomeo, who had been hunting, came home attended by a friend called Galvani, and they supped together, after which the two lay down and fell asleep; thereupon the murderers came out from their hiding-place and killed the sleepers with many blows of their knives, Bartolomeo receiving as many as twenty-six stabs, all in front. Then the " bravi," having draped the bodies in black mantles with hoods that they pulled over the faces of them, carried them noiselessly down out of the palace and through the deserted streets to the " piazzetta " of Santa Cecilia, where they left them at the door of Palazzo Nogarola — so that all might believe the murder to have been the work of that family. And there the dead Bartolomeo and his friend were found in the morning by the indignant citizens of Verona, who had loved Bartolomeo more than they loved his younger brother.

But when they came to Antonio with the dreadful news,

he feigned great sorrow and anger, and declared it to be his belief that the Lord Nogarola, together with young Malaspina, had committed the crime in order to be revenged upon Bartolomeo della Scala for having dishonoured the girl to whom, as was well known, he had been paying court.

And then, that all men might accept his story for the truth, Antonio had Nogarola arrested, with Malaspina and the girl herself, and condemned them to be tortured in order to make them admit the truth of his villainous accusation. But without success; for not one of the three would consent to confirm the lie in spite of their torments, and it is recorded that the girl even expired on the rack sooner than satisfy the demands of her torturers. The fortitude of the victims now began to have its influence upon public opinion, which came round ultimately to the conviction that Antonio himself had caused his brother to be assassinated for his own private ends, a conviction that was soon voiced aloud wherever men met together in Verona; so that Nogarola and Malaspina had to be released and declared innocent, greatly to Antonio's rage and confusion and to the joy of all good men. Shortly afterwards, Antonio found an opportunity of turning away the thoughts of his subjects from these events, so unfavourable to himself and his popularity, by ordering a series of feastings and entertainments on the occasion of his marriage to one of the most beautiful and the most foolish women of that or any other age —Samaritana de Polenta, the daughter of the neighbouring despot of Ravenna. Of Samaritana it is recorded, as an instance of her folly, that she would not put on even a pair of stockings unless they were decorated with jewels.

The festivities were held in the great Arena and were a complete success, so far as Antonio's design of averting the popular reprobation from himself was concerned. Nevertheless, they were destined — together with the coming of Samaritana — to usher in a period altogether disastrous to Antonio's fortunes, by reason of the fatal extravagance that now seized upon the administration and court of Verona, and the consequent increase in the taxation of the people. Soon, Antonio found himself compelled to engage in war with his neighbours of Padua, much as did Napoleon III in 1870 and with almost exactly the same result. For the Veronese troops, softened by disuse and led by incompetent generals, suffered defeat after defeat at the hands of their opponents under such experts as "Aucúa" (Sir John Hawkwood) and Giovanni d'Azzo; until at length Antonio, deserted by all who had once fawned upon him, fled from his capital under cover of a night of November, 1387. On the next day the town declared for the Visconti, the lords of Milan. In the meanwhile Antonio della Scala was making his way to Venice with Samaritana and their one small son; and there he died in August of the following year, leaving his wife and son to be cared for by the Venetian Republic, which settled a small annual pension upon them, and so ended the reign of the Scaligeri over Verona.

The Arena of Verona, above mentioned, is a very ancient and very perfectly preserved amphitheatre in the centre of the town; so old is it, indeed, that no man may say with certainty when it was first erected, although there seems little doubt but that the Romans were the builders of it. The Arena has been the theatre of every imaginable kind of spectacle, savage and solemn and pathetic, from the martyrdoms of early Christians and the gladiatorial

combats of Trajan's day, down through the ages to the bull-fights of Napoleonic times and the last scene of the Austrian domination in Venetia, when the Italian soldiers captured during the battle of Custozza were brought into Verona in the course of the afternoon of June 24, 1866, to be confined in the old amphitheatre.

In the month of July, 1805, Napoleon, who was then returning to Paris after his coronation as King of Italy at Milan, arrived at Verona and expressed his wish to witness a bull-fight. Such a spectacle was accordingly organised for his pleasure, and the great man came to preside over the entertainment in the Arena on the afternoon of the 16th of the month — at the very moment when he was straining every nerve, politically speaking, to prepare for an universal European war, and while his fertile brain was completing the details of his projected attack upon the English coast from Boulogne.

The account of this bull-fight says that a fine, courageous bull was loosened, and overcame, one after another, the dogs that were set on to it, until Napoleon, carried away by excitement, ordered that two, and then three, dogs should be set on to the bull at once; this number proving insufficient, moreover, the Emperor commanded that all the dogs kept there for purposes of bull-baiting should be let in to attack the bull simultaneously. Needless to add that the unlucky bull was eventually overpowered by its numerous adversaries and that it succumbed beneath their combined attack. It was at this point that one of Napoleon's general aides-de-camp turned to him, with the laughing suggestion of a warning to be gathered from what had just passed beneath their eyes: namely, the danger of a general hostile alliance of the European Powers, the which it might well be possible

for Napoleon to defeat one by one, or even by two or three at a time, but which must as certainly succeed in overcoming him when united by the bond of their common danger. We are not told what answer Napoleon returned to this; but it certainly did not influence him, seeing that he at once set himself to defeating the most formidable of his opponents, Austria, England, and Russia — an undertaking in which the disaster of Trafalgar was well balanced for him by the triumphs of Ulm and Austerlitz.

It is recorded, too, that he returned to Verona for a repetition of the detestable entertainment in the Arena in the month of November, 1807; but that on this occasion the bull-fight was spoiled for him by the early on-drawing of the night — which is not surprising when we read that the spectacle did not begin until half-past four in the afternoon! The last of these loathsome affairs took place, it is grievous to think, under good Archduke John of Austria, in the autumn after Waterloo, on the occasion of his assuming the functions of Governor of Venetia — the solitary instance of his sanctioning anything approaching cruelty. It was in the Arena of Verona that my dear old Adelaide Ristori made her first bow to the public of Northern Italy, although she was already well known to that of Rome. I cannot say at this moment precisely when she first acted in Verona; but I fancy it was at some time in the forties of the last century, the "roaring forties," when Venetia was making ready for the eruption of '48. Verona was the special darling of "Father" Radetzky, of whose beloved Quadrilateral it formed the chief fortress, and it was he who fortified it so well and lovingly as to make it well-nigh impregnable. It was to Verona, moreover, that he fell back with his

small but well-disciplined army during those dark days of May, 1848, when, as the poet Grillparzer wrote in a poem addressed to the fearless old hero:

"We others are but scattered ruins,
And in thy camp alone is Austria."

From Verona, too, it was that the Austrian troops took train in the July of 1866, under Archduke Albrecht, to go up into Moravia to the assistance of Benedek's army; and from Verona it was that the Archduke's historic telegram was despatched, on receipt of the news of Sadowa, to the Emperor at Vienna, bidding him take heart and have no fear for the outcome of the struggle: "Nothing is lost yet so if only both Army and People will spurn discouragement from them. After the defeat at Regensburg came the glorious day of Aspern. . . ."

But it was in vain that the lion-hearted Archduke tried to obtain the prolongation of the struggle; the country was willing to do its best, but the Emperor, by force of his responsibilities, was forced to view the matter from a different standpoint. It went against his conscience to lay a further burden of sacrifice and suffering upon his people, and so he did not hesitate to take upon himself the heartbreaking decision to suspend hostilities. The decision, too, however painful, was a wise one; and from that hour Austria has never ceased to grow in health and strength until to-day, when her position in the councils of Europe is once more what it was under Maria Theresa. Let us hope soon to see the time when, as her best friends have never ceased from urging her to do, Austria will put aside all the petty difficulties that have come between her and her mighty eastern sister, and so

will join herself to Russia, together with Germany, in a firm and lasting renewal of her only natural policy — that of the Dreikaiserbund, the good old alliance of the three Emperors. In regard to this question, I wonder if I may be allowed to quote the dying injunction of the Emperor Nicholas to his son, the Tsarevitch Alexander, in 1855 — "And tell Fritz" (Frederick William III of Prussia) "not to forget Papa's words" — by which he referred to the advice given by Frederick William II to his son, to the effect that he ought never to let anything interfere with the natural alliance of Prussia with Russia.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BRAVI OF VENICE

Fascination of Venice's Criminal Administration—Lords of the Night—Secret Detectives—Degeneration of Republic—Hired Ruffians—Their Murderous Activities—An Escapade of Pesaro, Paragon of Bravi—Gambara, Last of the Despots—Open War Against Law and Order—Final Pardon.

OF all subjects connected with old Venice, in the popular mind, that of her criminal administration is one of the most fascinating by reason of the endless traditions of mystery and terror with which it is fraught, and, of all historical executives, the Venetian "Signori di Notte"—the Lords of the Night—appeal the most irresistibly to the normal curiosity inherent in most people.

The very notion of the nocturnal jurisdiction implied by the title of that famous Board carries with it a suggestion of secrecy and of an unseen process of justice more or less summary, but invariably sharp and decisive. The members composing the Board were frequently of noble birth, and their official position was not unlike that of the Triumvirs of ancient Rome. Their functions, at the time when the Board first came into being, in the Twelfth Century, were those of police-chiefs and commissioners of sewers. They were responsible thus for keeping watch over the streets by night, and for seeing to the repairing of bridges and highways. In this manner they soon came to acquire an expert knowledge of those parts of the city that needed watching, either on account of the

questionable condition of their buildings or else by reason of their being the favourite haunts of the criminal part of the population.

Under them, less in the character of ordinary police than of a secret detective force, were the "sbirri," over whom they assumed special control after the unhappy affair of the conspiracy of the Marquis of Bedmar, the Spanish Ambassador, in 1618, when he plotted the overthrow of the Republic; a design frustrated only on the very eve of its accomplishment. The method employed by the "sbirro" in arresting his man was to throw his cloak over the victim's head and to lead him, thus muffled and blindfolded, to prison. Occasionally, also, the "sbirro" was the owner of a sponging-house, to which he would conduct his prisoner and there detain him until certain demands were satisfied — much as happened to Captain Rawdon Crawley in "Vanity Fair." It was in this manner — by muffling with a cloak — that the unfortunate Cavaliere Antonio Foscarini was arrested in 1622, on a charge of conspiring against Venice with the Spanish representatives at the Villa Dolo, the house of Lady Arundel and Surrey, where, together with her husband, she was living for the benefit of their children's education. The charge was a false one, but Foscarini was strangled for it and his body was afterwards hung up between the Red Columns in the Piazza of St. Mark — the usual place of executions — for the public to gaze upon.

But the chief quarry of the "sbirro" was that most romantic of figures, the "bravo"! The "bravi," originally merely the retainers of noble houses, became, with the increasing degeneracy of the Republic in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, more and more mere murder-

ers and ruffians, who plied their trade quite frankly for hire. The system ordinarily in favour among such members of Venetian society as had a grudge against any one of their neighbours was to send out for a "bravo"— they were always to be found at certain places and hours — and to bargain with him for a price that depended upon the extent of the hurt to be inflicted. I have seen one of the daggers used by such professional "bravi" and very curious they were, being crucifixes, of which the upper part of the cross and the transverse formed the hilt and quillons of a murderous-looking knife, its long double-edged blade having three lines engraved across it. The purpose of these lines was to mark the exact depth of the wound, whether slight, or severe, or mortal; if it were only desired that the lowest of the lines — that nearest the point — should be the depth of the stab, then the price was a small one; if the second line, then a larger sum of money would be necessary; and for the third, the uppermost line, a proportionate amount was demanded.

The alliance of the "bravi" with the upper class of Venice was from the first a natural one; for the common people has never any need of the services of hired men to settle its quarrels for pay. As a result of the wars of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries there had sprung up a large class of impoverished or ruined adventurers, who were willing to lend their services to any cause, public or private, for hire; some such, it is said, were generally to be found in the number of the patricians privileged to sit on the benches of the Great Council as the supreme national body was called. By degrees these impoverished patricians, who were designated under the name of "Barnabotti," drew to themselves the lawless element

of the population and yoked it, through custom and mutual necessities, to their service, until the thing came to such a point that no wealthy or noble family of Venice but counted its dozen or its score of such retainers, thus establishing a return to the feudal principle of a State — or, rather, States innumerable — within the State; each of which was a law unto itself. The only modern institution comparable to the "Bravi" is that of the so-called "gunmen" of New York, with their system of hire and their deadly feuds between gang and gang. For the records of the "bravi" show many such public floutings of law in Venice. In the year 1539 a certain individual, who would certainly seem to have been attached in some way to the establishment of the French Ambassador, having committed some crime or other, was chased by the "sbirri" to the French Embassy in the Calle San Moisé, where he found refuge from his pursuers, all Embassies being removed by international usage beyond the sphere of police activities. The situation, then, was an extremely sensitive one; so much so, indeed, that it was thought advisable by the "Capo della Sbiraglia," or chief of police, to send for an Advocate of the Commune, one Zorzi, that he might request the delivery of the criminal with all possible courtesy. Zorzi, on reaching the Embassy, met three of the members of its staff in the courtyard, and begged that they would make known his coming to the Ambassador. Instead of complying, however, they only ran back into the house, shouting to those within to make ready to bar the way; and Zorzi, on following them with some of the "sbirri," found the staircase held against his further advance by a crowd of ruffians, while others were beginning to hurl down furniture and household utensils out of the windows on to the

heads of the " sbirri " below. So that the prudent Advocate withdrew with his police and reported the matter to the Council of Ten, which promptly sent a force of soldiers to the Embassy to seize the original criminal, who had taken refuge there and, with him, all the other resisters of Messer Zorzi and the police. The Council had acted thus in spite of its all but certainty that the King of France would declare war on Venice for her violation of his Embassy; but, to its relief, no notice was taken of their action. It was quite certain, though, that the French Ambassador was in the habit of employing " bravi " about his person; and his colleague of Spain appears to have been guilty of the same delinquency. In 1556 Edward Courtenay, Lord Devon, died at Padua, of low fever, as was supposed, but in reality he was murdered by a " bravo " of Dalmatia, Marco Risano, in the pay of Ruy Gomez, the Spanish Minister. Courtenay's papers were placed for safekeeping in the hands of the Paduan authorities until the pleasure of Queen Mary should be known concerning them. The Council of Ten, however, was enabled to obtain a knowledge of their contents by means of its officer, the " Podestà " of Padua; and certain documents which proved that Courtenay had been an agent and spy of France were found among the papers and purloined by the Council.

A typical " bravo " of a certain kind was a hardened blackguard of noble family called Leonardo Pesaro. He is said to have combined in his own person all the vices of the age in which he lived, the end of the Sixteenth Century and the beginning of the Seventeenth. Again and again this scoundrel was arrested and expelled from Venetian territory as an undesirable citizen; and, as often, he would return either to the capital or to one of the

provincial cities, Padua or Vicenza or Verona. At last, though, in 1601, Pesaro crowned all his other achievements by one of the most shameless outrages ever perpetrated upon the laws of any country.

The way of it was this: On the last day of February of that year, Pesaro, happening to pass beneath the window of a woman called Lucrezia Baglioni, who was leading a bad life under the protection of a nobleman named Paoli Lioni, called out some indecent jest to her and asked her to repeat it from him to Lioni. That same evening Pesaro returned to Lucrezia Baglioni's house, where she was giving a banquet to a newly wedded pair, Lioni being of the company as a matter of course. It seems that Pesaro must have seen them both together at the window, for he repeated his jest of the afternoon loud enough to be overheard by Lioni, to whom, I fancy, he was unknown.

"What are you saying there, fool?" asked Lioni, with a pleasant condescension, smiling down at him from the iron balcony.

"What I please," Pesaro retorted, "and if any one wishes to cross swords with me, I am at his service!"

From this it seems evident that Pesaro was in the pay of some enemy to Lioni and that he had thus sought an occasion of affronting him, and so of drawing him into a duel; which motive of Pesaro's is confirmed beyond all doubt by what happened next.

On hearing this challenge, Lioni mildly withdrew from the balcony into the room, drawing Lucrezia with him, unwilling to expose her or his own dignity to the insolence of the unknown roysterer in the street: whereupon, Pesaro, seeing himself baulked of his prey, went off to his lodgings, put on his breastplate, mask, and morion,

and then collecting a few of his fellow-bravi went with them to find Camillo Trevisano, who was his partner and the junior member of their firm of "bravi." Having found Camillo, he clapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Come! there is a job waiting for us!"

And Camillo, nothing loath, put on his own armour and his mask and went with Pesaro to the house where Paoli Lioni and Lucrezia Baglioni, all unsuspecting of what was on its way to them, were feasting and making merry with their friends. The "bravi," on reaching the house, had no difficulty in effecting an entrance, and, rushing up the stairs, burst into the chamber where Lioni and Lucrezia were seated at table with their guests. There followed a prolonged scuffle, in which Lioni was slain and Lucrezia received a murderous beating from the small shields carried by some of the bravi — from the effects of which she was eventually so fortunate as to recover — whilst others fell upon the assembled company, wounding several members of it, and extinguishing all the lights save one, a torch held in one hand of the bridegroom the while he defended his wife from her assailants with a chair.

This was the last of Messer Pesaro's exploits, however, for the "sbirri" were sent out to take him; and, although he contrived to slip through their fingers, yet a decree of banishment was issued against him, together with Camillo Trevisano and another of their gang, Gabriele Morosini, and a price was set upon their heads. After which we hear no more of him.

Mr. Hazlitt tells us * how the Sieur de la Haye, in writing of the Venetian aristocracy in the year 1670, mentions that, "whether they were in their coaches or on

[1] "The Venetian Republic," Vol. 4, p. 525.

horseback, they were accompanied by a rabble of Hectors they call Bravi, many times only in ostentation, but too often for a worse end."

In the greater number of crimes perpetrated by the "bravi" of the city of Venice itself during the worst period, that of the Seventeenth Century, they appear to have done less with sword and pistol than with the arquebus and the stiletto; the employment of the latter is comprehensible enough on grounds of stealth and convenience, that of the arquebus I find less easy to understand, for it was an exceedingly clumsy weapon and possessed, as were all firearms of those days, of a tremendous "kick." The only reason imaginable for its use is that it had the advantage of killing at a longer and, consequently, a safer distance for the murderer than a pistol, which could only be counted upon at a very short range.

It was not, however, until the comparatively recent epoch of the last half of the Eighteenth Century that the "bravo" as an institution acquired his widest celebrity by the commission of what were practically acts of open warfare against the then moribund Republic of Venice. These acts were committed under the leadership of a man the like of whom Italy had not known since the days of the Despots, one Count Alamanno Gambara, a native of the parts about Brescia.

Gambara may well and reasonably be called the Last of the Despots, for he was assuredly the last private person to terrorise a large district of Upper Italy, with both comparative impunity and a certain measure of hereditary authority. As one of Thackeray's characters says of Lord Mohun in "Esmond," he could handle a foil — and a bloody one, too — before ever he learned to use a razor. At an age when most boys are in the

Fourth Form of an English public school, Gambara was the terror of the countryside in which his paternal castle of Pralboino was situated; so that, when he was only about fifteen years old, the Venetian Government found itself compelled to place him under restraint, his father being dead and his mother unable to control him. Finally, he was confined as a prisoner, first in Verona and then in the fortress of Palma, from the latter of which he escaped; for a while he wandered about the country, pursued by the police, who were unable to lay hands on him, until at last he decided to surrender himself to the authorities, of his own accord, which he did, and was exiled to Zara, the Governor of Dalmatia being requested by the Venetian Government to treat him with all possible consideration and to provide him with good company for the benefit of his moral welfare!

Gambara, however, was soon allowed to return to his estates, and once there lost no time in gathering about him a bodyguard of "bravi," with whose assistance he soon signalised himself in various encounters with the representatives of law and order in the province. Having engaged upon a kind of warfare with the Customs officials at Calvisano — a village near Porella, some distance south and east from Brescia — a detachment of Gambara's bandits raided the Custom-house there and killed one of them, beating the others and all but murdering their captain as well. On being summoned to appear before the Council of Ten at Venice, to render an account for his misdeeds, Gambara retorted by fortifying his two castles and adding to his little army of "bravi," thus openly setting the law at defiance. And now a reign of terror was inaugurated by him and by his henchman, Carlo Molinari, the head of his band of assassins.

This period of Gambara's career terminated with a peculiarly atrocious episode. His protection having been sought by a smuggler, Gambara took the man in as an additional member of his band. Shortly afterwards, a party of police happening to enter his territory in search of the smuggler, Gambara invited them to pass the night with him as his guests. This invitation they foolishly accepted, and the next day their dead bodies, hidden under a covering of green boughs, were brought into Brescia in a cart, which was left opposite the house of the Venetian Podestà or Governor of the city.

The result of this diabolical exploit was that Gambara was forced to seek refuge in flight — what other consequences he could have expected one cannot imagine — and he retreated into the neighbouring Duchy of Parma. Before long, though, he petitioned the Venetian Government to pardon him, which it was weak enough to do, and so he returned to his estates, where he continued to live — spending a good part of his time in Venice itself — much as he had done before. I do not know when he died, but I fancy he must have attained to a ripe old age, dying somewhere about the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. One can only hope that the grace of a final repentance may have been granted to him!

CHAPTER XIX

LEGENDARY VENICE

Venice, Bride of the Sea—Its Glorious Children—Pledge of the Crown of Thorns—The Miracle of Saint Saba's Relics—Intellectual Humility and Faith—St. Mark, Patron of the Venetians—Theft of the Saint's Remains from Alexandria—Reception in Venice—Early History—Tales of Hardships—The Gate of the Damsels—Legends of the Saint.

THERE is hardly a street or a building in Venice that cannot flower with some whisper of legend, if the soil of its story be but cultivated with determination; but a house-to-house search would involve the labour of years; and, though the pursuit of legend is doubtless an enthralling business, yet life is a small package, and it is difficult enough to find a room in it for all that it has to contain.

Still, if I am fortunate enough to lead some, through the lure of the legend, to the serious study of the history from which the legend is culled, my labour will have been repaid many times over. In the rush and scurry of to-day, when excitement is mistaken for labour and bustle for speed, scholarship — that is to say, the real and serious study of real and serious subjects — has become, except for the illustrious few, a thing of the past; but those few have gathered together, for our benefit, a precious mass of material, a rich harvest of romance wherewith we can brighten many a heavy hour; so let us wander into the garden, culling as we go, and acknowledging our heartfelt gratitude to those who planted it at the cost of such infinite toil.

The Bride of the Sea, seen from the distance, seems to rise like a softly coloured pearl from the misty embrace of the waters, and the effect is one of such awesome charm that, for a while, the mind can hardly carry the suggestions that crowd in upon it. What Venice contains! Is there any city in the world, save only Rome and Jerusalem — the cradle and the House — that can compare with that jewel-case?

The home, in one way or another, of Titian, Tintoretto, Giorgione, Veronese, and Barbari — the story of Venice is so illuminated with the glory of her children that its tragedy is almost lost in it, as black rocks emerge with their surroundings in the glint of the mid-day sun. From its meagre beginnings — a few slivers of land, half covered by the sea, where some hundreds of exiles took refuge and sheltered themselves in huts of mud and osier, down through the ages, she comes like an Easter "Gloria"— first a whisper, then a murmur, and then, from note to note, onwards and upwards, to the crashing splendour of her triumph.

Venice has grown old now, and she is content to doze in the sun's warmth and to dream of the golden past. Her gates are open now to inquisitive sightseers, and one can imagine her smile of amusement when, every now and again, some impudent brat digs her in the ribs, Ruskin-like, and bellows his fortnight-formed opinions of her in her ear.

"Oh, you were beautiful!" they cry, "but what a shocking condition of ignorance and idolatry you did live in! Of course you could not be expected to be as wise as Manchester or as spiritually enlightened as Piccadilly Circus — still!"

"Still?" she answers mildly. "I once held the Crown

of Thorns in my hand — did you know that? It was a very long time ago — seven hundred years and more — but I did."

It was soon after the death of John of Brienne, when the revenues of France were so eaten up by wars — with Bulgaria among others (it seems queer to think that that state which has been fighting the battle of the Crown so gallantly should once have been the cause of the pawning of the Crown!) — that the government of the Regency was compelled to open subscriptions for a loan. The one movable thing of value which they possessed was the Crown of Thorns, and this was given in pledge to a certain Albert Nerosini, as representing the Venetian and Genoese merchants who had taken up the loan (one wonders that some of them were not struck dead for the impious sacrilege!). It was taken from its resting-place in the chapel of the Bouillons, and, after the term of the loan had run out and the payment of the note was not forthcoming, by an arrangement with a rich Venetian banker, made in order to evade a scandal (one cannot help thinking that it was a little late in the day to be talking about a "scandal"), it was transferred for the sake of safety to the Church of Pantocrates, in Constantinople, whence, in the case of the Regency failing in the performance of its agreement, the banker was at liberty to remove it to Venice and keep it there for a further term of four months; also, it was agreed that if the money was not paid by the 19th of June, 1238, the Crown should become the property of the mortgagee.

We are not told what the Holy Louis IX of France said when he came to hear of this transaction, but when we remember that in those rough times even the most saintly of men were apt to "let fly" upon lesser occa-

sions and under far less temptation, one can imagine. He acted, however, with commendable promptitude and sent off two Dominicans on the spot to Constantinople to redeem the relic from pawn and bring it back, if possible, to their own country — a congenial task, no doubt, to the sons of St. Dominic.

It was a long journey that they had to make before they completed their mission, for the Imperial government had not liquidated its obligations, and the owner had already hired a ship to convey the Cross, and had set sail some time before the two monks arrived at the Golden Horn. But they tracked it to Venice, and there they obtained an audience with the Doge, Tiepolo, who must have been in an extraordinarily good temper, for him, for he seems to have made no objections, either to the audience or to taking them in person to St. Mark's, where he showed them a golden casket, sealed with his own arms, wherein lay the treasure they sought.

Louis IX had picked his men well, they paid the mortgagee instantly, and as instantly claimed the restitution of the Crown. It is rather difficult to see upon what they based their claim, but it was a pious age and they seem to have had no great difficulty in obtaining the surrender of it, for they were well on their way home before any question arose upon the subject between the Imperial government of Constantinople and the banker from whom they had redeemed the Crown.

Upon their return to Paris, Louis took the Crown in procession to the Sainte Chapelle, which had been built especially to contain it, carrying it in his own hands and walking barefoot and in his shirt through the streets, and there it remained for many centuries, to attest the devotion and piety of the Royal Saint.

The Venetians appear to have been ardent collectors of sacred objects at all times, for it is related that, as early as 992, a certain Pietro Barbolano, afterwards Doge, having been sent upon a diplomatic mission to the Byzantine Court, came across the remains of Saint Saba and conceived an ardent desire to transport the holy body to his own country. In parenthesis, and without in the least impugning the moral sense of either party to the transaction, the bargaining that followed between Barbolano and the officials, for the purchase of the Saint's remains, makes queer reading. There seems to have been no hesitancy in haggling for the relics, and no sense of any sordidness or sacrilege.

Even the storm that descended upon Barbolano on the night of his embarkation does not seem to have carried any message to him, but the priests were alarmed and begged him to reconsider his intention. But he, being on the spot with his two sons and some servants, soon had the casket on board, and set sail. The weather cleared up and equable winds soon brought them to the Venetian shore, when Barbolano ordered the chest to be transferred from the ship to his own house, which stood next to the Church of Sant' Antonino at Olivolo. But the casket would not move. So heavy had it grown that no human agency could be found to lift it an inch; and, while they were still struggling with it, the bell of the Campanile began to peal so violently as to make the great tower rock.

A crowd speedily assembled, and Barbolano, grasping the message of the bell and the meaning of the casket's weight, fell on his knees and said: " We will carry it into the Church, for the will of the Saviour has been de-

clared that the body shall rest in the shrine dedicated to his servant, St. Antoninus!"

Immediately the casket became as light as a feather, when it was conducted with all pomp to Sant' Antonino and laid upon the altar. As the casket touched the stone, the bell of the Campanile ceased its clamour; and then, over the remains, appeared a Dove of wonderful whiteness of plumage, which only disappeared after the "Te Deum" had been sung and the services concluded. An altar was built for St. Saba behind the choir, and the casket was placed in the Treasury of the Church.

It is told besides how, on that same evening when the "Piovano" of Sant' Antonino was strolling about his garden, among some rose trees which he had recently planted there, he noticed a flower of such unearthly beauty that he immediately ascribed it to the miracle which he himself had just witnessed.

I can almost see the smiles with which many good people will read this little story, but permit me to suggest, with all the most kindly and friendly feelings possible, to such that, once the human intelligence — and I care not whose it is — is permitted to grapple, unaided, with the possibilities of an Infinite Power, spiritual destruction is the invariable result. "Whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken — but on whomsoever it shall fall it shall grind him to powder!"

Legend and fact, faith and inspiration are so intermingled that to separate and classify them is impossible to any intelligence not directly inspired. But it is not a bad thing to bear in mind, if only for the sake of acquiring that intellectual humility without which the production of good work is impossible, that the veriest fool can disbelieve. It requires no brains or study whatever;

but to grasp and retain faith, based on conviction, and supported by reason, is an extremely difficult task, even for the strongest mind. Indeed, were it not for the grace of the Almighty aiding, I think very few, if any, could accomplish it.

The devotion of the Venetian to St. Mark is as great as that of the southern sailors to St. Antoninus. They were always a pious people and had carried about with them many relics, so that some discussion (probably tinged with acridness, since in these matters each had his peculiar devotion for his own) took place as to the choice of a holy patron, for the new settlement, when the descendants of the pioneers found themselves in a position to honour one with a suitable edifice — an insurance, so to speak, of the continued attention of the Almighty.

There was a legend, no doubt the smoke of some far-off fire of fact, that St. Mark the Evangelist had been shipwrecked upon the shore of Rialto and that, on landing there, he heard a voice from the emptiness of the island that said, "Pax tibi, Marce, Evangeliste meus" (Peace be with thee, oh, Mark, my evangelist!), words which afterward became the motto of the Republic.

St. Mark thereupon grew in honour among the Venetians, until he had assumed the position of Patron, and it was not long before the idea of bringing back his body, which reposed at Alexandria, began to take hold of the common mind. But, unfortunately, Alexandria was in the hands of the Mussulman, and the Emperor had forbidden any intercourse with the unbelievers, even for the purposes of commerce.

Now the Emperor's interdictions were not to be lightly disobeyed, life and fortune being the usual penalty; but the Emperor was far away and St. Mark could hardly

refuse to have any one going on such an errand in his keeping. He was an Evangelist, too — a mighty man and one who stood very near to the throne; so, commending themselves to his protection, two Venetians, merchants and navigators — Burno da Malamoceo and Rustico da Torcello — fitted out a very fast boat with merchandise for the East, and set sail, leaving no address.

When they reached Alexandria, they stayed on board until the evening, and one can imagine them sitting on the deck and watching the slow setting of the sun over the blue waters, their eyes straying hungrily to the city as it faded, shade by shade, into an amethystine obscurity.

They were running more risks than that of the Emperor's wrath that night, and they must have talked long ere they arrived at a plan of action for getting the body of the Saint on board. It would not be tamely surrendered, that was sure; in fact, as they knew, it would not be surrendered at all. They would have to take it, and, besides, transport it through the city afterwards.

When at last the night gathered the world into its mantle, they left the ship and were rowed ashore, when, taking their courage in their hands, they hurried through the soft eastern dusk towards the Basilica where the body was kept. How they came to know their way to it, history does not say, and that tangled maze of buildings which was Alexandria must have been a business to thread, seeing that they spoke no language which the common people in the streets understood. However, they eventually arrived at the Basilica and opened communication with the men in charge of the Church.

They seem to have gone straight to the point, for in a very short while they succeeded in bribing these latter

(one can only speculate on what they must have been compelled to pay!) and in obtaining possession of the treasure. That done, they placed it in the bottom of a cart and filled the latter with as much salt-pork as the mules could draw, knowing well that no Mohammedan, however casual, would touch the unclean meat or even approach it, after which they retraced their way through the sleeping city and smuggled their prize on board.

They slipped out to sea while it was still dark, and, the wind holding, made the return journey swiftly. Coming near to their destination, they sent on a light boat to carry the good news and to give the city and its rulers time enough to arrange for the triumphal reception which they were sure would not be grudged to the freight they were bringing.

Nor were they disappointed. The population came down to the shore of the Lagoon *en masse,* and the four greatest nobles of Venice carried the casket on their shoulders to the private chapel of the ducal palace, where it was to lie in state until a church could be built for it, amid cries of " Viva San Marco " that swept over the city and from island to island.

And it was thanks to the Evangelist that the scattered factions in Venice drew together again and became true Venetians, for their allegiance to him bound them gradually to each other.

The early history of Venice is a succession of wars, foreign and internecine, as has been the experience of every tribe and race that has risen above the common herd. She came to greatness in battle, and sank to littleness in peace. Without strife — without the continuous necessity of keeping herself in readiness for self-defence — she relapsed, like all the rest, and sank into insig-

nificance. Muscles unused will soon become useless, and this result will gradually affect the whole system.

As early as 809, she was important enough to attract the enmity of Charlemagne, who sent a fleet under his son Pepin to the skirts of the Lagoon. Then it was that Venice awoke to find herself a cause, for, in the face of the Franks, the partisan warfare ceased and under Badoer the Venetians stood together, back to back, and succeeded in handling Pepin hard enough to make him see the wisdom of leaving them in peace in their islands afterwards.

Situated as they were, they were the natural prey of freebooters of all sorts for centuries. It was an old custom with them that on the eve of St. Mary's twelve poor girls, endowed by the State, should be married to their lovers in the Church of St. Peter the Apostle at Olivolo. On the 31st of January, 939, some corsairs who happened to be in the neighbourhood, resolved to abduct these Daughters of St. Mark, knowing that the general festa would make a surprise easy and defence difficult, if not impossible.

Now the parents and kinsfolk of the lucky virgins and their betrothed used to assemble on these occasions on the island of Olivolo, where stood the Church, and from the dawn the barks skimmed the canals, gaily dressed with flowers and flags, bearing the happy couples to San Pietro with their dowers and wedding presents; so the attackers, conducted by their chief Gaiolo, a renowned ruffian of that period, hid themselves the night before the festival in the thick woods of Olivolo, and the next morning, so soon as the procession had passed through the doors, they crossed the narrow canal and ran at the Church.

The rites had begun, and the brides were on the point of being handed over to their future husbands, when the doors were flung open and the Church was filled with armed and yelling men, who dragged the girls from the altars, flung them into their boats, and sped away for Trieste.

The Doge was the first to grapple with the situation and rushed out, accompanied by the maddened bridegrooms, and called every one within hearing distance to arms. Some boats belonging to the Trunk Makers of Santa Maria Formosa being near by, the Doge and his companions jumped in, seized the oars, and pulled with frenzied energy for the lagoon of Caorla, where the rapers still were. Thanks to their knowledge of their own waterways, they caught their enemies in a creek, now called the Porto delle Donzelle (the gate of the damsels) and, with ferocious delight, set upon them.

The fight was a prolonged and bloody affair, but the outraged lovers avenged themselves very completely, by all accounts, for hardly a corsair escaped, and the girls were carried back to Olivolo, when the interrupted rites were completed and the tide of enjoyment allowed to rise to unusual heights in the feasting that followed.

In later years, to commemorate the incident, twelve young girls used to pay a visit in the company of the Doge to the Trunk Makers of Santa Maria Formosa on that date. It is said that the custom was originated by the Trunk Makers themselves, who requested the Doge to make the visit and even went so far as to offer the latter a new hat, in case of rain, which often resulted in another custom, that of supplying the Prince on these occasions with two hats and two bottles of wine.

There are several legends of St. Mark extant, but per-

haps the most interesting of them is one dating from a flood to which Venice was subjected, owing to a gigantic tidal disturbance in 1340.

It was on the 15th of February that the storm was at its worst, and by nightfall the dry land was almost submerged beneath the raging waters. A solitary sailor, hugging his cloak to himself, was standing in the windy downpour, as evening fell, on the Piazzetta of St. Mark's, when he heard himself addressed by name and, turning, saw beside him a tall and venerable person, who spake in a tone of calm authority: "I am St. Mark the Evangelist. Take me over to San Giorgio!" The man hardly dared to move, but awe getting the better of fear, he obeyed, and ferried the saint to San Giorgio, where, waiting for them apparently, stood a stout looking personage, whom the terrified ferryman presently learnt to be St. George. As soon as the latter was on board, the Evangelist directed the sailor to proceed to the Lido, where a third traveller was added to the party, in the person of St. Nicholas.

The sailor, his fears calmed by the presence of three such holy ones, proceeded to carry out the Evangelist's further instructions without hesitation, and rowed out into the tempest that was lashing the seas into a screaming fury. On they went, the waves, though mountain high, doing them no harm, until they seemed to be enclosed in caverns of water; and then, in an instant, they were surrounded by legions of devils, howling and whooping and leaping about in the air.

But these latter were not left long to triumph in the success of their wickedness. Any one of the three saints would, probably, have been strong enough to disperse them, but the combination was irresistible and, after a

brief resistance, they were exorcised and sent packing. Then St. Mark held out a ring to the sailor, telling him to take it to the " Procuratori," who would give him five ducats; and, before the man had time to recover his breath and voice his gratitude at the splendid reward, he found himself alone in the boat.

CHAPTER XX

A DOGE'S LIFE

A Wicked Son—Becomes Doge—His Marriage—Ambitions—Venice a Huge Conspiracy—The Palace Surrounded—His Fate—Venetian Ideals —Story of a Feud of the Tenth Century—Opened with an Assassination —Murderer Upheld by the Emperor—Venice Attacked—A Civil War in Venice—Uprising of the Citizens—Another Doge—Building of St. Mark's—The Doge and the French Abbot—The Doge Become a Monk —A Story of Marion Crawford's.

THE son of that Doge who rowed after the corsairs and helped to recover the brides, wrote a fiery and bloody chapter in the history of Venice — and died in the writing. He began early in life to plot against his father, who, feeling the weight of age and responsibility pressing hard upon him, allowed his son to sit beside him and help him in the business of ruling the State.

No sooner did the former feel the sceptre in his hands than he began to plot against the parent who had permitted him to handle it, until he was caught in the act, and only rescued from the mob who sought to kill him in the nick of time. His father then sent him into exile.

Human nature is a bundle of contradictions bound together with cords of training and pushed along by an intermittent moral energy, which we call conscience. An individual under given circumstances will attempt, at least, to guide his actions by some sort of reasoning; but place that individual in a crowd that is fired with excitement, in the same circumstances, and five times out of seven that individual will cease to reason at all. He

will be caught up in the whirlwind of the mob's emotions and do things that will make him blush ever after to think about.

Which, perhaps, accounts for the fact that, though Pietro Orosino ravaged the coast line and plundered the Venetians for years, yet in the end they presented him with the throne, and deposed his old father who had ruled them wisely and well during those years, to do so.

Then Pietro, having at last got his opportunity, proceeded to show the world what kind of a man he was. Feeling the need of the Emperor's friendship, he drove the unfortunate woman who had married him into a convent and sent her son into a monastery, after which he married the sister of the Marquis of Tuscany (who must have been a person of singularly plastic morals), and being now a connection by marriage with the Emperor he proceeded to further fortify his position by establishing his kinsfolk in half a dozen other States, where they became people of the first rank and of considerable power and influence.

Now Pietro's wife was a German Princess (even in those far-off times most of the disposable royalties seem to have been Germans) and he placed German troops in the fortresses of Ferrara, which she had brought to him. Then, as a final buttress to his strength, he organised a small army of professional soldiers as a bodyguard. As soon as he had accomplished that, he began a systematic cutting of all the ties that bound him to his duty towards the Venetians and attempted to dismiss his counsellors.

That was as far as he was allowed to go. The first families — who had ambitions of their own — quietly armed the people, and presently Venice became one huge conspiracy, and one night, at a given signal, the palace

was surrounded and every avenue of escape cut off. Then Pietro, sitting in the upper part of the Palace, heard the roar of the mob, rising and falling and rising again like the bellowing of a pack of wolves, and knew that his fate had leapt upon him out of the silent night, as fate has a habit of doing.

His terrified men informed him that every exit was blocked and, having given him the information, separated and scurried away into corners and hiding-places like rats, all save a faithful few, who stood by him; and with them and his wife and child he ran for a private passage which connected the Palace with St. Mark's, hoping to take sanctuary there. But the conspirators knew of the passage, too, and there they were waiting for him, when he stumbled through the dark, and there they killed him and his child and every man that was with him; but they let the woman go —fortunately as it proved for them — for Pietro's wife was kin to the Emperor.

In view of the fact that the story of Venice is so stormy a one, it is interesting to note that all the early ideals of the Venetians ran in the direction of peace and mutual equality, and so determined were they that discord should not be permitted to raise its head that they made their very dress conform to their desires and adopted a long, loose dress, which would be most inconvenient for hot-blooded people who might be apt to quarrel upon small pretexts.

They left these ideals behind them, however, as the State grew and flourished. It is not in the Latin temperament to tread too narrow a road, so far as the passions are concerned, and, even to-day in the south, if one man has the misfortune to slay another one, he has always two pleas to make, either of which will, as a rule, find a sym-

pathetic hearing in court. "La passione" is the first — and any moderately good reason for rage is generally all that is asked for, by way of explanation. "Scirocco" is the second, and that covers everything from a broken dish to a slit gullet. No one is supposed to be quite in his or her right mind while the close, hot, dry African wind is blowing.

A certain Doge of the name of Ziani, who lived in the beginning of the Thirteenth Century, happened to hear that his son, while bathing near the Abbey of San Giorgio, had been attacked by some dogs belonging to the monks, and had been very badly bitten, so badly indeed that, at the time, he was not expected to recover. Flying into a rage of truly ducal proportions, the ruler instantly ordered the monks, the monastery, and the hounds to be burnt — all together. The monks appear to have escaped, but the house and the dogs were destroyed before the Doge had time to rescind the order. In true Latin fashion, of course, he repented of his decree, just too late to prevent its execution; and, in his repentance for the sacrilege, he undertook to rebuild the monastery at his own expense and take upon himself, besides, an annual pilgrimage, as an additional penance. He was a man of the most kindly nature and of a most pious disposition!

To illustrate the combination of romance, tragedy, loyalty and treachery, piety and brutality that characterised the time and the place, few better examples can be found than the story of the feud between the Caloprini and Morosini in the Tenth Century.

It arose over the hoary question of whether the friendship and support of the Eastern or the Western Empire was most to be desired for the good of the State. This, to be sure, was only a peg on which a private feud

was hung, and neither one house nor the other, as far as can be ascertained, had the slightest personal leanings either in the direction of Otto or of the Byzantines. It was enough that a certain amount of popular feeling could be roused and a certain number of the common citizens could be induced to quarrel on the subject, while the great Houses were always to be depended upon when either loot or power was dangled before them.

The Caloprini opened their political campaign by the assassination of the most prominent member of the opposing faction, Domenigo Morosini, who is said to have been a person of the most exemplary piety — and his naked body was discovered in a boat near one of the water gates. It was asserted, and with some show of truth, that he had been set upon, while coming out of church — he had made a tactical error in going to worship in the district over which the Caloprini held sway — and had been beaten to death by some ruffians in the pay of Stefano of that ilk. The boat being handy, they had pitched the body into it and had allowed it to drift whither it would.

To Stefano's surprise, the citizens of Venice seemed to regard the affair with real anger and disgust; but, knowing the form which their resentment would probably take, he forestalled their intention, by slipping out of the city one cold, wet evening with several of his followers and arrived, after a long journey, at the Court of the Emperor.

Here Stefano flung himself at the feet of authority and, in terms almost abject, begged the Emperor to look with pity upon his, Stefano's, beloved State, torn with the dissensions of wicked men, who had driven him and his companions into exile for no reason except that, being

people of some position and of grave and pious character, they had attempted to reason with the belligerents and had refrained from mixing in the ungodly business. How much of this Otto believed it is hard to say, for he appears to have withheld any definite statements until the preamble was over. Continuing, Stefano, on his own account, offered Venice to the Emperor, with all its contents, adding that, in the case of the former's acceptance, he would be more than pleased to act as the Emperor's Viceroy and would guarantee a solid yearly tribute. History asserts that Stefano was believed to be honest, but by what process of reasoning the belief was arrived at we are not told. At any rate, it did not take the Emperor very long to decide upon the annexation of the province, the governorship of which was at the same time offered to that sterling patriot, Stefano.

The first step the Imperial Court took was to declare a blockade and a cessation of all commercial intercourse between Venice and the Empire. The former was then declared to be in a state of siege. The blockade was cheerfully undertaken by Stefano in person, whereupon the Bishop of Belluna descended upon Città Nuova, which was now defenceless, and sacked it thoroughly.

The government of Venice fulminated against the traitors, but, beyond soothing their own outraged pride, the verbal thunders accomplished little or nothing. It is difficult to make any pretence of serious protest upon an empty stomach, and Stefano must have laughed consumedly when he heard about it.

But, just as Venice was about to surrender to the inevitable, Providence came to its aid and removed Otto by means of an ague, when the Imperial policy was promptly reversed by the two Regents, and Stefano was out in

the cold once more. As Napoleon once observed, "La fortune de la guerre est bien capricieuse!"

It was an awkward situation that he was in, to put it mildly. Forgiveness and charity were not salient features of State policy in those downright times, and everything that he owned on earth was in the State which he had been so active in attempting to starve, and of whose recent inconveniences and humiliations he had been the direct cause.

He contrived, however, to wheedle one of the Regents, Adelbert by name, into interceding with the Venetian Government for him, and they, partly out of gratitude to her and partly out of a desire to remain in the good graces of the Imperial Government, consented to the Caloprini's return. But Stefano never saw Venice again, for he died before the negotiations were concluded, so that his sons had to return alone and face their fellow-citizens as best they could without him.

On their return, they discovered that the Morosini had not been standing still in their absence, for they had brought the Doge and his family into an alliance with them, and the feelings of the two brothers were not improved by the more or less open detestation of every soul in Venice. Not that they would have ever owned that the affection or hatred of the common people was a matter of any interest to them whatever, but such things make themselves felt constantly, through any armour of indifference, however strong.

The position became more strained with every passing day, and it was not long before the embers, fanned by such inspiring winds, burst into flame, and civil war broke out again as merrily as ever. This time it ran its course, and for three or four years Venice was in its grip until

at last, one morning as the two brothers were entering their gondola to return home, they were set upon by some of the Morosini and stabbed.

Then at last Venice rose in its wrath and demanded satisfaction, vowing that a term should be set to the horrible state of things, when the city was at the mercy of a single family, who did what they pleased with whom they pleased, and of a Doge who was their ally. The latter vehemently disclaimed any connection with the affair, but they paid no attention to his protestations and he, realising that the supporters of the Caloprini were strong enough, with the public fury at their backs, to overthrow him, stepped down from the ducal throne and retired into a monastery, where, soon after, he died.

He was not the only Doge to leave the world and fly to the spiritual life.

One Oneolo, the successor of that Candiano, of whose tragic end I have already written, was elevated to the Dogeship in spite of himself, while the aftermath of the hurricane that had destroyed Candiano was threatening to destroy Venice; outside influences, too, were adding their quota to his heavy responsibility, for the dower of Candiano's wife had to be repaid and the Emperor was behind her. The Ducal Palace and St. Mark's had to be rebuilt, and he was a poor man, but, despite his poverty, he surrendered a very large part of his personal property to the building of St. Mark's, and sent far and wide for workmen worthy of the task. He did not do anything by halves, for he gave to the Church some of its most beautiful possessions, and raised a great hospital opposite the ducal palace, besides.

He did not have much political peace during the time that he was striving so hard and sacrificing so much for

Venice and the Venetians, for the Candianos, recovering their balance, plotted against him ceaselessly; but he seems to have borne his trials with a strength and a constancy hardly of this world, consoling himself with daily visits to the poor and afflicted and the joy of giving to them everything that he could spare — and, very often, a good deal that he could not.

He met with small encouragement from any one. The people were not enthusiastic over his diligence in repairing the damage which they had done, and only the very poor ever really loved him, while the great Houses were monuments of silly wickedness and selfishness from whom nothing useful could be hoped or expected; so that it can be easily understood that the advent into his life of a really good and intelligent person must have come near to unsettling his mind for the time being.

It happened that among the crowds of pious visitors to the shrine of St. Mark, during the second year of his reign, there was a certain Frenchman, Abbot of a monastery in Aquitania, and, the instant attraction of kindred souls drawing them to one another, the Abbot became the Doge's confessor, counsellor, and friend.

When, at the end of the day, his last visitor dismissed, his last piece of business despatched, Oneolo could close the doors of his palace upon the world, one can imagine the relief and joy with which he would draw up his chair beside the Abbot, and lighten his heart of all the accumulated resentments, fears, and worries of the day, immersing himself in the priest's description of the holy sweetness and sanctified calm of a monk's life. Oneolo was a born monk, and he must have felt, as he sat and listened, much as a soul in the purifying fires of purgatory may feel when the gates, far above him, are opened

for a moment to allow some fortunate soul to creep in, and it catches between the opening and the closing a sight of the Heavenly City and obtains a breath of the perfumes of the Celestial Rose Garden.

But, ardently as Oneolo desired the cool shades of the cloister, he could not leave the hot sands of public life yet. There was too much to be done, and well he knew that only his possession of the high office kept it safe from the fiery, blood-spotted hands of his enemies and the State's.

He thought over it a long time, and at last came to the conclusion — a quite unfounded one — that twelve months of hard work, of hand and brain, would suffice to put the affairs of the Republic into such shape that he might safely leave them to her to attend to. So, redoubling his efforts, he slaved on, always with the shining vision before his eyes.

I suppose, as the months went by, that the desire fed his imagination and that the possible through sheer longing became gradually probable, and, as happens with so many people, that the mind thrown forward constantly to realisation at last staid there, far ahead of accomplishment.

At the end of the year, he had barely begun the long process of putting the business of the Republic into a condition in which a successor could handle it, but when, with the autumn, the Abbot came back to Venice, Oneolo was ready to leave. So, in the dusk of the morn, a cloak thrown over his shoulders and wrapped around his face, he stepped into a boat, and the two were pulled silently and swiftly through the sleeping city to the mainland, where they got into their saddles and galloped away into the night.

He had a hard time at first, for his healthy appetite needed stronger fare than the rule of the order which he entered prescribed; but he persisted, and when, years afterwards, he passed away, his canonisation followed, so that he became, as he would have wished to become, a permanent glory to his State and an example for future ages to follow.

There is one pretty story connected with a Candiano — a flower in that waste of thorns — which I have taken from my brother's " Salve Venetia."

It has to do with a certain Elena of that name, who fell in love with a man who was her social inferior in every possible way. He was poor and a plebeian, either of which was to be the mud in the canal of the Princely House that held the Dukedom so many times. Elena's father was even more prejudiced than the rest of his kin at that time, if such a thing is possible, and had been looking around him covetously, even since Elena had been a small girl, for some youth whose wealth and blood might make him a possible match for a Candiano.

In the meanwhile, as has been said, Elena had also cast about her, unconsciously as a creeper winds itself about its supports, and, having no worldly judgment to handicap her choice, selected the man who could fructify her soul, rather than one whose worldly prospects she would be expected to enrich.

Very secret she must have kept it, for, innocent though she was and untouched by the coarsening finger of the world, she knew perfectly well what would happen to young Gheravdo Guvro if word of her spiritual escapade should come to the ears of her gentle men folks, and, of all the world, only her old nurse was in the secret. The old woman was devoted to her and, being a plebeian

herself, her class sympathy went out towards the young man, so that she helped the lovers to meet again and again and whenever the chance offered itself.

This sort of thing could not last for long, even with the most virtuous disposition and the best of intentions, and it was not very long before the natural consummation of the affair came, and they were secretly married.

Then, safe in the irrevocable nature of the bond, Gheravdo sailed away to make his fortune, as do the Calabrian youths of to-day, leaving his wife behind him — and, considering the moral characteristics of her kinsfolk, he seems to have taken some considerable risks.

Before he was fairly off, Pietro Candiano informed his daughter that he had found that for which he had been searching and that he was going to marry her without any possible delay to a gentleman of the name of Vittor Belegno. Upon learning this, the girl's heart stopped and she fell into a trance, which resembled death so closely that she was placed in a coffin and put away in the Cathedral before the evening.

Then luck stepped in, and Gheravdo, for some reason or another returned, only to hear upon arriving of her sudden death. Frenzied, he ran to the Cathedral and, with the aid of the sacristan — obtained in the usual fashion — opened the tomb and wrenched the lid from the coffin. Taking the beloved head in his hands, he smothered it with kisses, crying and sobbing over it until, to his amazement and joy, a tinge of colour appeared in the silk-white cheeks, and, under his rapturous, half-incredulous caresses, the body lost its rigidity and the blood stole back into the cold limbs, and he lifted her out, babbling his gratitude to the Almighty, and carried her away.

It is said that when her father set eyes on her his joy overcame everything else in him, and that he gave her to Gheravdo, gladly and without reserve, but upon that I, personally, have my doubts. Still it may have been, and one can only hope that it was!

CHAPTER XXI

"THE WEDDING OF THE SEA"

Origin—Venice's Growth—Treaties with the Emperor—Pietro Orseolo Annihilates the Pirates—Welcome on His Return—Story of Marco Polo —A Trader with the East—A Strange Journey—Bokhara—Capital of Kublai Khan—Impressed with Christian Ideals—Return Journey—At Home in Venice—Failure of Plans to Convert the Tartars—Again in the Far East—Lost for Twenty-five Years—Return to Venice with Vast Wealth—A Gorgeous Banquet—Marco's Rehabilitation—Ruskin and the Church.

THE origin of the ceremony known as the wedding of the sea dates from the reign of Pietro Orseolo, the son of that Pietro who left the world for the cloister, after two years of, to him, extremely unsympathetic labour. The old gentleman had prophesied the boy's rise to his father's plane, during one of the former's very few visits to him, in these words: "I know that they will make you Doge, and I know that you will prosper." The prophecy was more than fulfilled, for young Pietro proved to be a good man and a strong ruler, and he raised Venice from the position of a small state, torn to pieces by internal warfare, and constantly at the mercy of her stronger neighbours, to an eminence from which, looking back at her immediate past, and down upon the development of those same neighbours, she could call herself the "Queen of the Seas," and that without fear that any would attempt to challenge her self-assumed title.

He began his work by trying to lay that fruitful cause of so many quarrels, the question of allegiance to the

Empire of the East or to that of the West, by making treaties with both, and that done — his decks, so to speak, cleared for action — he turned his attention to the free-booters, who for a long time past had been exacting a heavy annual tribute from the weakness of the distracted State.

In the first combat that followed he defeated them handsomely, and they, in revenge, not daring to jeopardise themselves in the lagoons and canals, turned upon the coast towns of Dalmatia, sacking and looting them one after another.

These latter, in despair, appealed to Venice for help, and Pietro jumped at the chance, and gathered together a fleet as quickly as he could arm it. From the ecclesiastical authorities he received St. Mark's banner, and set sail, as we are told, in the early spring.

Contrary winds, or rather fortunate ones, drove them over to Grado, whose Patriarch was the son of the murdered Candiano, the predecessor of Pietro's father, and Pietro was somewhat nervous of approaching the former in the midst of his own people. But the Patriarch had buried the old feud, perhaps with the aid of the thought that Pietro's cause, at the moment, was his own, and sailed out to meet them, and brought with him the Standard of St. Heonagora, which he left with them.

Sailing away, Pietro received the submission of all the defenceless ports and islands from Grado clear to the pirates' stronghold, the rock-enclosed city of Lagorta, the sight of which might have given pause to a much stronger force than that which he had brought with him; but, as Napier so truly says, moral force is the greatest thing in war, from wherever or whatever it may be derived, and, strong in the righteousness of his cause, his belief in him-

self, and, it may be, fortified by the homage of the ports and islands, he attacked, seized, and destroyed it utterly.

The welcome which Venice gave him on his return was no half-hearted affair, as one may imagine, since he had sailed away from a State — and returned with a small empire in his lap. The Clergy, all in the most sumptuous vestments, were pulled across from the historic olive woods of Castello and met Pietro in his own magnificent barge, at the Lido, where the Bishop prayed and the priests sang and the incense rose, and the Bishop sprinkled Pietro with holy water, and poured what was left into the lagoon, imploring the Almighty to make the sea safe both for them and for all others who should sail upon it.

In this search for flowers, one cannot stay in one part of the garden, methodically extracting the choice of its beds, and then move, as methodically, on to the next; so I must be excused if, seeing a bloom, I pick it, and look around me afterwards for another, instead of keeping my eyes on those on either side of me, when I might be tempted to smaller and weaker blossoms, and so, my basket filled, find no room for the best, when I come upon them afterwards.

Marco Polo was one of a family of merchants, quiet and law-abiding people, and who traded successfully, in spite of the almost continuous state of war in which their world was plunged, with the near East, and particularly with Constantinople, where for many years they had been in perfect safety, thanks to the chests full of treaties which the Venetians had made with the rulers of the Eastern Capital.

But now, as Marco came into his manhood, his affairs were no longer quite so secure, for a change of dynasty

seemed to be approaching the near East, and the Venetians, being allies of the old House, were by consequence the enemies of the new, and of their friends — a state of things not at all to the taste of those steady, somewhat pompous men of affairs who, until that time, had had this extremely satisfactory market to themselves.

Foreseeing, probably, that their State would presently be involved in a war for the commercial supremacy of the East, the outcome of which was, to say the least of it, doubtful, Marco and his brother resolved to take time by the forelock and establish a new trading base before the old one was lost to them for ever; so, after a great deal of prolonged discussion, and one may imagine how much adding and subtracting and multiplying and dividing of figures, the two men started, sailed for the Crimea, where a foothold at least had already been obtained, and a base of supplies partially established.

They left Constantinople while the struggle between Paleologus and the Latins was at its worst, and took with them a stock of goods, as being the most portable and convenient agent of exchange in the mysterious and practically unknown countries for which they were bound. They seem to have had some idea of the products of the East, however, and no doubt expected to make a most profitable journey among the barbarians.

A stranger journey has never, perhaps, been taken. The East, the huge, ponderous, top-heavy old East; was only known of at all through the emissaries of Innocent IV and, as an occasional assistance against the Saracens, by the Crusaders.

Their wanderings from Soldadina to Bokhara must have been eventful enough, for that part of the world was quite as much at war with itself as was Europe,

but Bokhara itself must have been a weary memory to them afterwards, for they were kept there for the better part of three years, being unable either to advance or to retire — the unknown in front and the over-risky deserts behind.

Here they were picked up by some envoys journeying to the court of Kublai Khan — who offered to take them with them, assuring them that the great Prince would be overjoyed to receive them, since he had never seen a European in his life.

They spoke no more than the truth, for when, after months of hard travel over the steppes and through the hot, arid, pungent dust — the days as hot as fire itself, the nights, as often as not, bitterly chill — the two hardy brothers arrived at the Khan's Capital, he received them with great honour and placed everything of his at their service, as though they were brother Princes. A gentle-mannered, polite, very imaginative person they found him, with an unlit fire of religious feeling, to which their devout Catholicism very soon put a match. A wise man — one may well say a great one — the empty idolatry of his own people could have no attraction for him, and when the two brothers, at his earnest request, expounded to him some of the leading tenets of Christianity, he was so struck with its ideals that he begged them to take a petition to the Pope, that His Holiness would send him a hundred men — wise men — versed in the uses of argument and capable of converting his Tartars by convincing their reason in the matter; a task for wise men, indeed, when the reason of the average Tartar is taken into consideration, unless the Khan intended to supplement their efforts by making an appeal of his own to other of their senses.

The two brothers started on their return journey by themselves, carrying with them a passport in the shape of a golden tablet on which the Prince's injunctions to whomsoever it might be shown were carved. Three years it took the adventurous pair to arrive at Acre, one of the last outposts of civilisation, when they were told that the Pope was dead.

Having been informed by the legate that there was little chance of a Pope's being elected for a long time to come, and, seeing that only to a Pope could the petition be delivered, they cast about for some way to fill in the time, and bethought them of Venice. Neither of them had paid their native state a visit in fifteen years, and Marco, it appears, had a child there. His wife was probably dead, though it is impossible to be sure of it, and Marco's heart was naturally moved at the prospect of an entirely new experience, that of holding his own child in his arms.

So to Venice they repaired, and in the pleasures of renewing their acquaintance with old-time friends, and bathing in the comforts and delights of civilisation, the Khan and his business gradually faded from their minds. The election of a new Pope seemed to be as far away as ever, too, and the whole world of the church was divided into camps, with no prospect that any one could see of a solution of the trouble.

It must be explained that the Emperor had taken it into his autocratic heart, at that time, to elect a Pope of his own, and force recognition from the rule of Christianity in the usual fashion if his presumption were resented.

As time went by the explorers' hearts began to get restless again, for that fever never leaves its victims alone

for long, and their imaginations turned to the East, where the Khan was still waiting for them; with that, it appears, their religious instincts awoke again, and the business of converting the Tartars became the most important thing in the world to them.

In a very short while they were once more in Acre, where they had another interview with the Legate Tibaldo di Piacenza, who was soon to move from Acre to the throne of Peter (as Gregory), from whom they obtained a document which should explain to Kublai Khan the impossibility of satisfying his wishes in the absence of a supreme authority.

They had got no further than Armenia when they were overtaken by messengers from Tibaldo, announcing his election and bidding them come to Acre, where he would do what he could in the matter of the desired mission.

So to Acre they returned; but Gregory could not find anything like a hundred wise men who were willing to undertake such an errand, and, since he needed all of such that he could find near him just then, the Emperor having by no means relinquished his ambitions, he compromised by despatching a couple of Dominicans.

These pious men, however, while they had been willing enough to risk themselves in an ordinary venture, shrank — and quite reasonably — from the prospect which the brothers unfolded to them on the way; it must be confessed that the chances they were asked to take were rather appalling, and, at the last point from which they could return safely, they left the brothers and made back whence they had come.

So the three (for Marco's son accompanied them) struck out into the hinterland alone, and for three long years they journeyed on ceaselessly, now in peace, now

fighting, now fed, now half starved, until at last they came to the rising ground, from whose sandy height they had looked their last on the city of Kublai Khan eight years before.

With the descent of the farther slope, they vanished from the world, as completely as though they had been swallowed up in a "dust-devil," and a quarter of a century passed before they reappeared, by which time every memory of them had grown dim in Venice.

It was, as I have said, only after twenty-five years that they managed to make their way across Asia, slowly and, it must be supposed, anxiously, for they carried with them a burden of wealth, the like of which had never before been heard of in prosaic Europe. As they had vanished in the twilight, so they returned in the dusk, three figures, crouching in the long boat, looking about them at the dim bulk of house, church, and palace with eager eyes, and whispering to each other, as old, long-forgotten landmarks rose up from the water to greet them. They must have chuckled to themselves, too, at the thought of the amazement of their relations at the joke which they were going to play upon them presently. For a sorry appearance they must have presented, yet beneath the rough Tartar clothing was hidden that which would have bought a street of those shadowy buildings that loomed up on either side of them.

The Casa Polo happened that night to be full of their relations, brought together for a "festa" of some sort, and when they arrived in the courtyard the sounds and the lights must have warmed the travellers' hearts. Nothing could have been more to their taste, or at least to that of Marco, who was decidedly fond of the "limelight," than the prospect of being thus precipitated into

a crowd of strange relations. That the present owners might not be enthusiastic about giving up the "Casa" to its rightful owners does not seem to have occurred to them, for they advanced boldly and knocked, announcing themselves loudly when the windows filled with heads, and the gate — which may be seen to this day in the Corte della Sabbinera — with bodies, and the air with voices, demanding to know who these evil-looking strangers were and by what right they came thundering at the doors of a noble House.

A difficult business it proved for the three to so much as make themselves understood, for their Venetian was rusty and their faces were those of absolute strangers. They were dirty and brown and altogether foreign, but they seem to have made some impression, for they were allowed to make a serious attempt at establishing their identity, by asking every one present to a great banquet on the following day — when, as the story goes, they astonished the company vastly by changing their dress no less than three times during the meal, each time for a more gorgeous one, until the climax came upon young Marco's leaving the table and bringing into the room the three coarse Tartar coats in which they had returned, and ripping them open, when such a rain of jewels fell upon the table that the company sprang to its feet with cries, for nothing like it had been heard of in the memory of man. At the sight of such prodigious wealth, it seems the relations recognised them instantly, as is the habit of relations to this day, and fell upon their necks, and all the young plants of grace came to the house from all over the town and also fell upon their necks and made much of them, and the night must have slid into the day in a blaze of glory and wine.

So the adventurers came home again, and for years afterwards Marco continued to relate the amazing tales of their adventures, not ceasing even when he was in prison in Genoa, after the battle of Cuozla.

I must, with permission, take this opportunity of warning all and sundry against a too serious consideration of the late Mr. Ruskin in any other capacity than as a student of the beautiful. In that he is alone. As a philosopher — or as a theologian — he is also alone, and I would very strongly recommend my readers to leave him in his loneliness. I would not take the space to notice the calumnies on the Church and her history with which his immortal work is interlarded, save that she and her teachings are, as far as can be judged from contemporary writings, utterly unknown to any one outside of her own Communion. Again and again I have picked up articles, written by men of known learning, professors, clergymen, men of letters, whose names are almost household words, that set forth, with all complacency and assurance — not as statements about which there might be some reasonable doubt, but as facts, so well known as to admit of no further question — such appalling lies — there is no other word for it — that one is driven, at times, to the point of wondering if it is an epidemic from which they are suffering — a disease which they have caught unconsciously and in spite of themselves. On most other subjects they are sane — on other questions which they undertake to discuss they are informed — they must be, or else how could they have arrived at their present eminence? Yet, for the discussion of this, admittedly the most intricate of studies and one for the understanding

of which a lifetime of labour is hardly sufficient, they never appear to feel the need of any sort of serious preparation. In the same way, while they will vigorously adhere to facts, elsewhere, refraining manfully from entangling comment, here they seem to lose all sense of moral obligations in the direction of effectual research, and, naturally kindly, as many of them are, they become simply venomous. Naturally accurate and conscientious, they develop a spirit of vicious speculation, which amounts to a possession.

I will not enlarge upon this topic, nor would I have embarked upon it at all were it not that the spirit of Ruskin — narrow, self-centred, self-contented, utterly uninformed, making a religion of ill-will, and ill-will into a religion — has as much sway in our day as it had in his, and its expression in his works is the reflection of the real feelings of many, many people to-day. Let none doubt that; and the fact that the calumniators are, some of them, men of blameless private life, or of unquestionable mental integrity in their own work, makes them all the more difficult to reach, for the pride which those private virtues engender is a horribly thick armour to penetrate.

CHAPTER XXII

WAR WITH GENOA

Supernatural Recovery of the Apostle's Body—Ruskin's Account—Origin of the War—Early Life of Carlo Zeno—His Conquests—Governor of a Province in Greece—Return to Venice—Adventures at Constantinople—Escape of Zeno—Tenedos Becomes Venetian—Attack of the Genoese—Their Repulse—Carlo's Popularity in Venice—Pisani's Career—Carlo Routs the Genoese—Peace—Carlo's Fame—His Visit to Jerusalem—Last Scuffle with the Genoese—Life in Venice.

IT has been told how, after the assassination of the Doge Saundo IV, the mob, in a state of ungovernable fury, set fire to the ducal palace, and how this fire, spreading, injured many noble buildings including St. Mark's itself. Orseolo, it may be remembered, left the world within two years of his election, and the repairs were finished under Vital Falier.

Then, to the dismay of the Doge and everybody else, it was discovered that the original resting-place of the Holy Apostle had been forgotten; and the pious Doge, having exhausted all the possibilities, resolved to leave the matter to the Almighty, who, by the intercession of the Evangelist, might enlighten them if He saw fit.

So a general fast was proclaimed, for how long we are not told, and prayers were offered up in all the Churches and in every home; a procession was arranged for the 25th of June, when the people — or as many of them as could — assembled in the Church and all prayed together with their whole hearts.

As they were doing so, to their wonder and delight

the marbles of one of the pillars began to shake a little, which, as they watched, fell down completely, disclosing beneath it the bronze chest in which the body had formerly been laid.

Ruskin, of course, stigmatises this "as one of the best arranged and most successful impostures ever attempted by the clergy of the Romish Church"—how he does love that expression! He goes on to say that the body of St. Mark had, doubtless, perished in the conflagration of 976, but since St. Mark's was not burned to the ground in 976, but merely damaged, it is not difficult to see upon what he bases the suggestion. Because the site was forgotten? There is not the slightest doubt that it was. Even if they had wished to, the clergy could not have deceived any one then, for all had had access to the spot formerly. It was not a secret at all.

Besides, the stone pillar was solid. It had been in place for a long time. To insert a bronze coffin into solid stone is no light task, while to do it unobserved and to replace the marble afterwards well enough to escape detection, in a church whose doors are open from the early hours of the morning until late into the night, savours of the impossible. The story is perfectly true, for the record of it is to be found, as Ruskin tells us, in a mosaic of the North Transept.

In the histories of all states and countries there are names that stand, as it were, as the very pillars upon which those histories are built; and, of these, some are solid and practical, some light and ornamental. Venice has had her share — Carmagnola, Pisani, Carlo Zeno, Marco Polo, Andrea Contarini, and many others.

Two, at least, of these served together — namely, Vittor Pisani and Carlo Zeno — during that incident in the

almost ceaseless state of war between Venice and her maritime and business rival, Genoa, which is known as the War of Chioggia. So like the accounts which we read in our time of quarrels between great corporations, is that of the origin of this particular war, that it is worth explaining, if only to illustrate the unchanging quality of our human nature.

The long, long struggle that culminated in the War of Chioggia had its origin in an alliance — what is known in our day as a "gentlemen's agreement"— between the two States, to boycott the Crimean Peninsula, in revenge for the murder of some Venetian and Genoese traders there by a certain Chief of the name of Zani Bey.

To be sure, very little incitement was needed on either side, at that juncture, for affairs at Constantinople had been spurring Genoese ill-feeling for some time past, and Venice, not to be taken by surprise, had been pushing her preparations — just as the great monetary powers are doing to-day — to a point where they were a threat and a menace to every state in her neighbourhood.

Each was hiring bravi and condottieri in every direction, each was hard at work forming alliances — the story of our own time all over again — and when Venetians discovered that the Genoese were flirting with the trade of the Crimea, in spite of their pledged word, and vice versa, the trouble came to a head, and both Carlo Zeno and Pisani were set to work.

Carlo Zeno came to the sword by devious ways. He was destined for the Church, and was sent at an early age to Avignon, in order to bring him under the eye of the Holy Father and into the circles where sinecures and promotions were most easily obtainable.

Nor were the hopes of his relations disappointed, for

it was not long before he was appointed to a canonicate at Patras, that carried with it a very comfortable income; soon after which, being still a boy, he was sent back to his uncle's people and thence, for his studies, to Padua. Here the spirit of the future Terror of the Seas began to appear in the boy, for he refused to study with any seriousness and spent most of his time and all of his substance in gambling and riotous living.

At last, having sold his books, and lost the proceeds, he escaped, by night, from the pack of creditors who had been dogging his footsteps, and took service, though with whom it is difficult to discover.

For some time he wandered over Italy, learning, as he went, the trade which was afterwards to make him famous, until, when five years had passed, he began to feel the need of "ranging" himself, and returned to his uncle, who had been mourning him for dead, and who received him with open arms.

The German custom of the "Wanderjahr" is an old one, and, as far as can be judged, a very good one, the idea being to harden the young man's mind with travel before he settles down definitely to the pursuit of his business. In many trades it is demanded by the apprentice, and in almost all, it is at least expected. No one enquires too closely, upon his return, as to the sort of life he has been leading, for it is assumed that he must have been busy, since it is a *sine qua non* of his twelve months of freedom that he support himself by his trade. Carlo's uncle and brothers did not enquire either, but packed him off, as soon as they could, to Patras, to take his Canon's stall and become a prosperous, comfortable, easy-going Prelate, just sufficiently distinguished from the rank and file to be somebody, and far enough from any

chance of real responsibility to allow of his leading a serene and unruffled existence.

The godson of the Emperor, he was a person of some considerable influence, too, and the knowledge of war that he had acquired during his service with the Condottieri was not at all amiss in an ecclesiastic of the Fourteenth Century, when Bishops had as often as not to guard their own marches with their own good swords. His education in ecclesiastical subjects was sketchy, of course, but amply sufficient for any need that he was likely to have of it; so he set out for Patras, half a priest, half a soldier, a canon unordained, a soldier unattached.

Now the Governor of Patras, just then, was engaged with the common enemy of Christendom, the Turk, and since the soldier in Carlo was always on the surface, the Governor, who had learned from some source or another of the young gentleman's temperamental proclivities, and no doubt from Carlo himself of the various notable captains under whom he had served, pushed him into the fight. Carlo was only twenty-two, but he worked so well, and flung himself into the campaign with such wholehearted enthusiasm, that before long he was wounded so desperately that for one night he was deemed to be dead and preparations were made to bury him, a fate which was only averted in the nick of time by his return to consciousness.

It was not for many months that he recovered of his grievous hurt, for the better healing of which he was sent back to Venice. In Italy he was fortunate enough to meet his godfather, the Emperor, and to make a good lodgment in the great man's favour, the result of which was to send him on Imperial business to England, France,

and Germany; so that, when he returned to Patras, he was better equipped than ever for either of the two causes, ecclesiastic or military, which he might choose to espouse.

At Patras, he found the choice made for him, since the place was once more imperilled, this time by Frenchmen and Cypriotes, and the good Bishop, handing over to him the tiny force which was available, bade him do the best he could, as speedily as possible.

Carlo's best — the best of "Zeno the Unconquerable" — was very good indeed. So good, in fact, that it reads like a fable, but the authority is, or ought to be, unimpeachable, so it must be accepted that during six months of hard fighting he kept ten or twelve thousand enemies at bay with seven hundred men, and ultimately persuaded them to draw off, without the loss of a single man on his own side.

It must be borne in mind, though, that in those delectable days fighting was less dangerous for the combatants than at any time before or since. The accounts of the wars are very nearly bloodless — for the combatants, *bien entendu* — not for the inoffensive and helpless non-combatants, the sacking and looting of whom was the agreed consideration for which the mercenaries gave their services.

It was shortly after this affair that the direction of Zeno's life was settled for ever; jealous of his success and his growing fame, a Greek knight, in a moment of spleen, accused him, after all he had done, of treachery!

There is a touch of to-day about the form which Sir Simon's venom took that brings that distant past very close to us. "Tradito!" "Nous sommes trahis!" These are still the first cries to be heard when the gold

of the spendthrift years has run out and the horrible creditors crowd into a nation's House.

One would hardly have thought that a reasoning man in Zeno's position would have worried his head with such foolishness. The insult might well have been the occasion of a righteous wrath and contempt, but that is all. Carlo, however, did not see it in that light, and, despite the protests of his more sensible friends and the pleadings of his Bishop, he challenged his traducer, and, by so doing, threw up his ecclesiastical ambitions and took the sword in perpetuity.

Free now, and without friends, he lost no time in marrying a rich and noble lady who had fallen in love with him, at Chiavenna; her he left, after a short honeymoon, in order to meet Sir Simon, according to arrangement, at Naples.

That kingdom being in its usual condition, it was no easy task to penetrate to its Capital or arrive there, even by sea, in anything like safety. But Carlo was not a person lightly to be deterred when the prospect of a fight was in question, and in due time he arrived in the presence of Queen Joanna, who had been selected as an umpire.

But she, in the meanwhile, had come to the decision that it was a case for damages rather than for a duel, and, a court having sat upon it, the Greek was ordered to refund Carlo for his expenses. There being nothing else to keep him, he returned to his wife in Greece, where he was soon made governor of a province. Soon after his wife died, and he, being unable to retain her dowry, reëmbarked for Venice, where he struck out anew as a bachelor.

It was not long, though, before he married again, and

his second wife, the daughter of the Admiral, Marco Giustiniani, had a sufficiently large fortune to permit of his establishing himself as a merchant in the East.

Either he must have left his wife behind on undertaking this expedition or else he sent her home later, for the adventures through which he passed at Constantinople would have been too risky, even for him, had he had any " incumbrances " with him.

Constantinople, at that time, was in the hands of a usurper, Andronicus, who had deposed his father, Carlo Yhomuas. Now Carlo Yhomuas was a friend to Venice and had gone out of his way, while he was on the throne, to show favour to Zeno's father.

When it came to his ears that Zeno was in the city, it seemed to him that here was a chance to escape from his fortress and retake the crown, and that since the wife of his gaoler was an old " friend " of his, and still devoted to him, she would make an excellent go-between.

It was no very desirable undertaking for a woman, since Andronicus had filled the court with spies, and discovery would mean certain torture and death; but she accomplished her mission, and Zeno, to whom such adventures were the salt of life, fell in with the idea instantly and joyfully.

Having obtained the promise of support from some Greek soldiers, by ways known only to himself, he strolled out one evening along the shore, until he arrived at a point where, across the water and rising straight up from it, stood a high tower; being assured that no one was about, Carlo studied a window at the top of it speculatively.

It was not grilled, but it was small and it was a hundred and fifty feet up. From the land side he could do

nothing; it was too well guarded, and all that he and the surprised captive up there had to rely upon was a small woman.

He would have to wait for the dark of the moon, he saw, and, besides, he must find some means of getting a long, stout rope into the Emperor's bedroom. This was accomplished, I think, by winding it around the lady's body, and since she had the privilege, while her husband's back was turned, of ingress to the ex-Emperor's apartments, she waited until the former was making his rounds in the evening and slipped past the unsuspecting sentry in the dark.

Then she dropped the rope from the window and left Carlo Yhomuas to himself. Carlo, who was as much a sailor as he was a soldier, speedily climbed up and, having hauled himself through the window, begged the Emperor to descend.

But, at this critical moment, Carlo Yhomuas' nerve failed him. As he told Zeno, he had two other sons who were both at the mercy of Andronicus, and Andronicus was a desperate and bloodstained scoundrel who would probably cut both their throats if their father ran away.

Zeno argued and pleaded and stormed, but all to no purpose, and, finally, he was compelled to climb down again alone and make his way home.

No sooner was Carlo Yhomuas alone again, however, than his courage came back to him, and the gaoler's wife was entrusted with another communication for the young Venetian, to which the latter replied instantly, spurred by the proposal which Carlo Yhomuas made to present Venice with the island of Tenedos, in his will.

This time, though, Fate was against them. It is very

rarely that the hussy smiles upon a second attempt, if her favour has been too lightly treated during the first one, and now she turned her face away spitefully. The gaoler's wife had hidden Carlo's note in her shoe and, just as she was reaching Carlo Yhomuas' room, the shoe slipped off and the sentry pounced upon the paper.

In an hour she was in the torture room and in an hour and a half she had given up her secret, while Zeno (upon whom, as soon as the accident occurred, Fate smiled again, as upon a well-loved child, who has caused his parent a momentary displeasure by the company he has been keeping, but who, once rescued from his friends, immediately becomes the adored offspring again) escaped to sea and got on board a Venetian warship, which happened to be visiting the port, and showed the will of Carlo Yhomuas to the officer commanding.

It did not take this latter worthy long to come to the conclusion that, since Carlo Yhomuas was the rightful Emperor, and, also, since he was not likely ever to reach his youngest son, that the Venetians might as well take possession at Tenedos before Andronicus could exercise his illegally obtained power and make a present of the island to his friend, the Genoese.

Fortune still smiled upon her son, for, when the fleet came to Tenedos, they found it to be held by an officer of Carlo Yhomuas, well fortified, and stocked with provisions; and he, having heard everything and seen his Emperor's will in his own handwriting, was easily persuaded to place the island under the protection of Venice. That done, and the seeds of a pleasant and profitable war with Genoa sown, they garrisoned the island as heavily as they could, and sailed for Venice.

The Senate, as it was to be expected, disapproved

gravely and openly of the whole affair — and promptly sent a fleet to Tenedos to hold it against all comers! With this fleet sailed Carlo Zeno. After a brisk but useless ruffle under the walls of Constantinople, Carlo returned to Tenedos with three ships, just in time to get his men ashore and his defences arranged before the Genoese swooped down upon him with twenty-two ships. I cannot be quite sure if, on this occasion, he had Michel Steno with him, though it is certain that the latter was, at one time, his assistant in the island; but, if he had, the subsequent rout of the Genoese becomes more understandable. Two such minds as Carlo's and Michel's were worth a good many hundred men. Be that as it may, the Genoese were repulsed, twice running in two successive days, and that so fiercely and with such loss that they left the island in a hurry. Nor did they come back, and Carlo, as soon as his wounds, of which he had received three in the two days' fighting, would permit of it, returned to Venice in a blaze of glory.

Venice, at the time of his return, had a half-finished quarrel with the Carrara upon her hands, and Carlo was immediately despatched to the scene of hostilities.

In 1378, he was made military governor of Negroponti, but the sea called him again, soon after, and from that time until the Genoese siege of Chioggia he spent his time upon his favourite element and at his favourite business — to wit, fighting the Genoese.

During the interminable wars that occupied the next thirty years, Carlo became the one shining star in the State's skies that no cloud or storm could dim or hide. Vittor Pisani, his nominal superior, had his ups and downs, and proved himself to be almost if not entirely Zeno's equal, but Zeno was the popular idol.

He raided the Genoese coast in such a fashion that his name was a terror to the city of Genoa for a hundred years afterwards, and, by closing the Mediterranean to his enemies, he struck a vital blow at their prosperity. By keeping continuously on the move and darting from point to point with his light ships, he contrived to keep a considerable part of the Genoese fleet constantly employed, and a good part of the Genoese troops on the coast; but his peripatetic methods were not always to the advantage of Venice, for they made it extremely difficult to reach him, either with news or orders, so that, although the Senate despatched boat after boat and messenger after messenger to acquaint him with the defeat of Vittor Pisani at Pola, by the Genoese Admiral Luciano Doria, with instructions to return, it was by accident that the story reached him, six months after the battle, as he was standing out of Candia, where the Doge's messenger arrived soon afterwards.

He left Candia on the 2d of December, 1379, and sailed for Paranzo, where he arrived upon the 14th. Although he knew of the defeat at Pola, he had not as yet any real idea of the desperate condition of Venice until he arrived at the Lido, where a government agent gave him a view of the condition of affairs and begged him to hasten to Chioggia, then closely blockaded by Vittor Pisani.

Chioggia had fallen to the Genoese on the 6th of August, but on the 21st of December, Pisani, who had only been released from the prison, where he was incarcerated after Pola, because the people flatly refused to follow or serve under any one else, had succeeded in bottling up the Genoese fleet, much as the Japanese bottled up the Russians at Port Arthur, with the difference that his

operation was successful and theirs was not. To bottle up a strong enemy is sensible; to pay a broken one the distinguished compliment of sinking good ships, and sacrificing life to prevent him from getting at you, is something else.

Unfortunately, his troops were amateur soldiers, and, though their patriotism, helped by their acquired and inherited hatred of the Genoese, had held them to their task for a while, yet a winter campaign uses up the reserves of such passing enthusiasms quickly, and poor Pisani found himself, as have others who have attempted to carry out long and arduous operations with irregular troops, between the devil of abandoning his enterprise altogether and the deep sea of the revenge that the well-armed, well-disciplined, and half-starved enemy would exact by land, the instant that the necessity for guarding the harbour was over.

His men clamoured ceaselessly to be allowed to return home and attend to their affairs, disregarding the probability that, if they did relax their grip upon Doria's throat, they would have no affairs to attend to, save that of paying the heaviest indemnity that he could exact. But the reasoning powers of human beings in the mass are not great, and, at last, Pisani was compelled to promise that, should Carlo Zeno not arrive within two days, he would sail for the Lido.

Heavy days they must have been for Pisani, with the very existence of the Republic depending upon whether or no a person who had not been heard from for many months past would, accidentally, arrive in time to redeem the promise and save it.

As it has been already suggested, Carlo's popularity was due in a very large measure to his astounding luck;

nor did it desert him now. For forty-eight hours was Pisani compelled to endure his agony, in order that Carlo might arrive exactly at the right moment — not an hour too soon to spoil the splendid effect of his seemingly miraculous appearance upon the scene, not an hour too late to save Pisani and Venice.

It was at daybreak that Pisani, despair in his heart, climbed out of his cabin and mechanically swept the horizon with his eyes. For some minutes he staid there, unwilling to turn away from the clean, open sea to the sight of the prize which he was being forced to give up when it was already in his grasp. How his heart must have ached, as he recalled the gathering of the citizens, the prayers, the shouting and boasting, the speeches of the Doge, the " do or die " ranting of the weak-backed people, who, having seen war (for they had, up till then, been a highly respectable community and had hired their fighting men by the month or year, as they needed them), were, of course, perfectly ready to plunge in it, and still more ready, once they began to feel the weight of it, to crawl out again.

His dreary meditations were suddenly disturbed by a cry from aloft, and he came to himself with a start as the cry was repeated.

It was a sail, and, in answer to his furiously anxious questions, the lookout presently reported that it was that of a fighting-vessel, and that there were more of them coming up behind her.

At last he shouted down that he had counted eighteen of them — and then Pisani, frantic to know the worst or the best as speedily as possible, despatched a light boat to reconnoitre and see if this were light or darkness that was descending upon him.

The little boat shot away into the morning haze and, when almost within hailing distance of the leading vessel, her crew straining their eyes to catch any hint which might tell them who and what these new arrivals were, they saw a flag broken out from the peak.

It was the banner of St. Mark, and, with a yell of delight, they went about and raced for Pisani's flagship. Their demigod had arrived!

It was a long story that he had to tell when the Doge met him, and it must have been balm to the wounded heart of the former when he heard how Carlo had ravaged the Genoese coast, captured Genoese convoys, dislocated Genoese trade with the East, and, to crown his triumphs, had captured a Genoese galley off Rhodes, with half a million pieces of gold in it.

Although he had been twice wounded, and, Pisani's promise redeemed, there was no need of haste, he insisted upon being allowed to place himself opposite Buondolo. One night a storm sprang up of the Mediterranean sort, and the Genoese attempted to take advantage of it and break through the blockade to open sea; but Carlo drove them back again. It was during this action that his ship dragged her anchor and was driven in under the Genoese forts, and Carlo received an arrow through the throat, which all but killed him. He did not leave the deck, however, nor did he seem to pay the least attention to his wound, until his ship was clear again, when he had the misfortune to stumble over an open hatch and fall into the hold of the ship. Even then he had sufficient presence of mind to turn over on his face and let the blood run freely, thereby saving his life.

It does not seem to have taken him long to recover from a wound which would have been the death of most

men, for he was almost immediately made General-in-Chief of the land forces of the Republic — to be exact, on February 15 — and he had received the wound some time either at the end of January or the beginning of February!

Then it was that Zeno the leader appeared, as distinct from Zeno the fighter and tactician.

By the capture of Lorado, Carlo had cut the Genoese off from their remaining base of supplies at Icomea, and all that remained to accomplish was the recapture of Chioggia itself, either by storm or siege.

The former course having been decided upon, the famous Sir John Hawkwood was sent for — he whose name is a household word in Italy to this day, and his men were assembled at Palestina, an island in the near neighbourhood of Chioggia.

But Sir John did not appear, and the unmilitary Venetians were faced with the necessity of finding a man who could first reduce the wild free-lances to some sort of order, and induce them afterwards to trust him as their leader. Fortunately these gentlemen were shut up on an island, which must have been a sweet place for any unfortunate natives who might have been there in those days, for Hawkwood's men were drafted from half a dozen separate nationalities, most of whom were fighting each other in France and Germany at the time.

The business of disciplining them was laid upon Carlo, as the only man who had had any experience of condottieri; brave as he was, he might well have shrunk from the task, as from entering a den of wild beasts, but he accepted it instantly, put on his armour, and had himself rowed over to the island.

When he got there he found the men, as he probably expected to do, at each other's throats, but he was not daunted by their savagery. We are told that many of them had served under him before, so that when he announced his arrival with a blare of trumpets, and called upon them to listen to what he had to say, they did as they were told, and surrounded him, pouring out their complaints as to a man who was a soldier himself and who could understand them.

To be sure, he had known what was at the bottom of their grievances before he started. They were mercenaries. They fought for pay and for loot. The Senate, being extremely hard up, had not paid them, nor had it shown any honest intention of doing so. Carlo himself had already been told, and with all gravity, that the Senators were of the unanimous opinion that it was his duty personally to serve without pay.

But, having temporarily calmed the storm, Carlo immediately communicated with the Senate and informed that august body that, unless the mercenaries' pay were forthcoming, he must give up any idea of storming Chioggia. It was an affair for regular troops, and, even in the unlikely event of his being able to bring the Venetian amateurs up to the defence, there was not the least chance of his being able to induce them to attack with any seriousness. He even went so far as to offer to subscribe five hundred ducats himself if the Senate would come forward with a similar amount.

This they did, very unwillingly, and Carlo was enabled to give his whole attention to the frustrating of the Genoese commander's scheme for saving his fleet by digging a canal through the island and bringing his ships

out to open sea, whence they could once more threaten Venice effectively.

This captain's name was Grimaldi, and he was, by all accounts, a daring and resourceful man, but he had not reckoned with Carlo Zeno. He could outnumber the Venetians by five thousand and more, but, unless he contrived to cut or manœuvre his way out, he would be driven to surrender by famine — one hope, albeit a very doubtful one, he had besides, and that was the arrival of the Genoese fleet under Matteo Maruffo, who, emboldened by an easy victory over Giustiniani, near Naples, appeared off Chioggia on the 14th of May, when he immediately challenged Pisani to an encounter.

Being a serious person, Pisani naturally refused to accommodate him and run the risk of losing men and ships, when the ends of the campaign could be attained without any further trouble than that of remaining where he was; and, a short while afterwards, Matteo withdrew, and the garrison of Chioggia were compelled to watch their last chance disappear seawards.

Before this, it must be said, Carlo had succeeded in capturing Brondolo, and the Genoese were running short of food and water. The garrison tried to foment disorder in Carlo's command, and even attempted to assassinate Carlo, without success. At last, on the 22d of June, the Genoese struck their colours, and on the morning of the 24th Carlo made his entry.

Afterwards, Carlo captured the Castle of Marano, and finally drove the Genoese into their own harbour of Genoa and kept them there, which brought the war to an end. When peace was once more upon Venice, Carlo, now about forty-seven years old, was made Captain-General of the forces, and later was very nearly

elected to the Dogeship, only being defeated by the fact that, if Venice should again find herself at war, there would be nobody to lead her troops, since the Doge's place was in Venice. For another thing, the Patricians disliked him intensely, he having always and resolutely refused to follow their advice during the war.

There being nothing more to be gained at the moment in Venice, Carlo went a-visiting once more, and the receptions which he received at the various courts of Italy must have been a source of great gratification to him after the dark days he had been through.

Like a true soldier — one who has no personal ill-feeling for the accidental enemy of the moment and who, the question in hand once settled, is ready to do anything in his power for the man he has been fighting — Carlo, on meeting a former adversary in the person of the son of the Count of Padua, at Asti, and finding him in exceedingly straitened and uncomfortable circumstances, took him to his arms and lent him four hundred ducats. It is pleasant to know that his generosity was not imposed upon, for the money was paid back later, when the exile was restored to his possessions.

Later, too, Carlo again defeated the Genoese, led this time by a French general, and, after that, hung up his good sword and turned to civil affairs; though he once accompanied the troops against the Carrara, as a "provveditore," and, on Padua being taken, was made Governor of that city.

Now, the real rulers of Venice were the dreaded and terrible Ten. From any decision of theirs there was no appeal, and, since these decisions were guided only by their own passions, it can be understood that the civil affairs of Venice were in a precarious condition. On the

taking of Padua, Carlo's old beneficiary, Francesco de Carrara and his son were taken to Venice and there, by order of the Ten, strangled in their prison. Carlo's successor in the governorship of Padua, having nothing better to do, took upon himself to go through the old city accounts, and, among them, discovered the entry of the four hundred ducats which Francesco repaid to Carlo Zeno. The account made no mention of any loan, though, and the governor, anxious to get himself into the good graces of the Ten, immediately sent them the document.

It seems hardly credible that even that vitiated council could have refused to accept Carlo's word for it, but, in spite of all his glorious services, they insisted upon believing this was a bribe that he had received and sentenced him to the loss of all his places and titles and to five years of imprisonment besides! And yet Venice was called a Republic!

By the lifting of his finger Carlo could have raised such a storm as would have swallowed up the civil government of Venice in a week, but he seems to have accepted the horrid injustice — as did Pisani before him — with philosophy. It is not likely that the sentence was executed, though — even the Ten were not powerful enough for that, one imagines — and Carlo was soon off on a journey to Jerusalem, where he was knighted — he, Carlo, the scourge of Genoa, the terror of the Turks!— by a Prince, it is said, of Scotland, though of that, in view of the character and occupations of such of the Scottish Princes of the times as our history tells of, one cannot but have the gravest doubts.

An old man now, Zeno had one last scuffle with the Genoese, in the service of the King of Cyprus, and after beating them soundly returned home, at the age of seventy-

four or seventy-five, and settled down. He lived for several years afterwards, gathering around himself the best of the city — artists, literati, scholars of all sorts. And when he died he was carried to his grave on the shoulders of the seamen, as a sailor should be.